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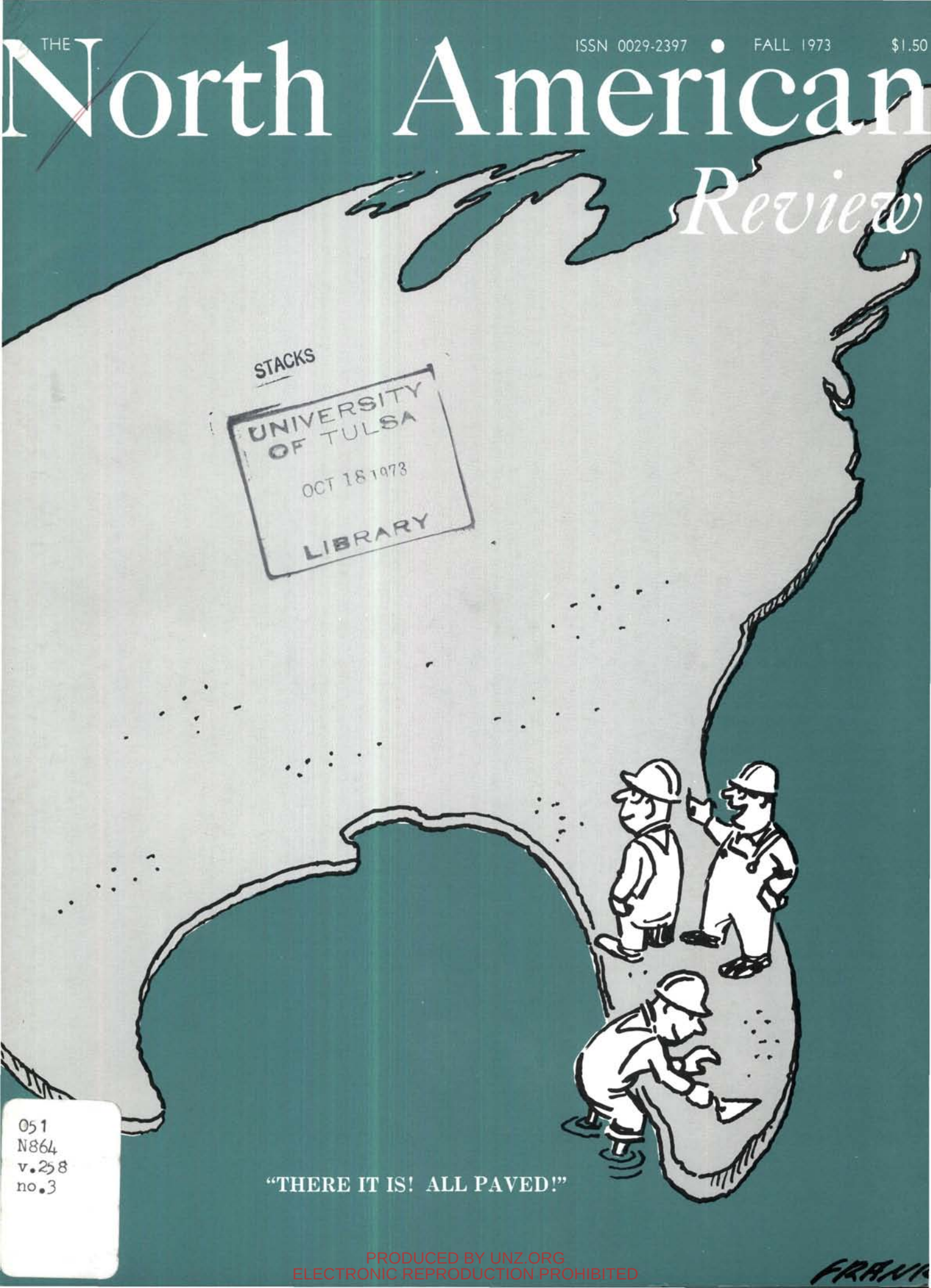

"THERE IT IS! ALL PAVED!"

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The North American Review

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

We have always been proud of our fiction—from those golden days when our nickname was "the Old North" and we published Saroyan and Steinbeck and even (further back) Joseph Conrad, to these more recent times whose literary tarnish has prompted innumerable laments on the demise of fictional forms. The fact is that the NAR (the spare and far less romantic shorthand we now affect) is one of the better neighborhoods of the short story. We publish between twenty and thirty stories a year—that's more than some *monthly* magazines print—and from our own vantage point on the far side of 5000 manuscripts submitted to us each year, fiction looks to be in disgustingly good health. We don't go in for the big names, partly because they don't go in for us, partly because we couldn't afford them if they did. But so much the better; in the last three years Martha Foley's *Best American Short Stories* has cited 16 NAR stories and reprinted two, and the O. Henry collections have included yet another.

Cases in point: The five stories in this number of the NAR range from the extraordinary to the frivolous, and their five authors happen also to be novelists of promise and power. Lawrence Sargent Hall ("The Experiment") is the granddaddy of the group, a latecomer to fiction whose *Stowaway* earned the Faulkner award a while back, and whose short story "The Ledge" is probably the most reprinted fiction piece of the last twenty years. George V. Higgins ("Two Cautionary Tales") came out of nowhere a couple of years ago with *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* (now a movie) and, more recently, *The Digger's Game*. Nolan Porterfield ("And a Man Who Sounded like Harry Von Zell") wrote *A Way of Knowing*, which won the Jesse H. Jones Fiction Award two years ago. Chester Aaron ("The Day We Buried Grandpa") seems the most prolific of the five; *An American Ghost* is his second novel, and a third, fourth, and fifth will appear at (we trust) decent intervals. David Kranes ("Pyromania") has published a novel called *Margins* and is finishing another, *Memorial Day Weekend*.

In short: Read. Share our pleasures.

The article dealing with the Great American Pastime of cutting cities in half is the second of two articles on highway-related matters by Leo Hertzel. (The first, dealing in friendly fashion with the prospects for the Great River Road along the Mississippi, appeared just a year ago.) It's worth reminding our readers that LaCrosse, Wisconsin, is one of scores of cities facing a similar bisection, and that the arguments pro and con are the same all over. The photos accompanying the article happen not to be of LaCrosse; they were taken in the Boston area a couple of years ago — just before Massachusetts made an agonizing reappraisal of its freeway plans and found them Not Good.

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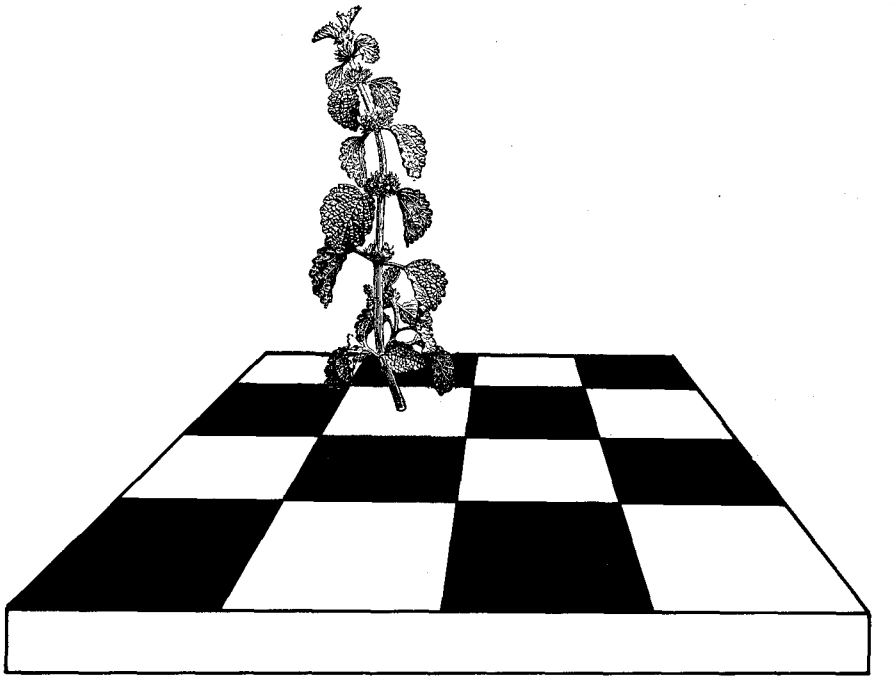
Joseph W. Meeker / William K. Woods / Wilson Lucas

Red, White, and Black in the National Parks



The Western world has long looked upon nature as a symbol of peace and purity. The Garden of Eden was a natural setting characterized by beauty, simplicity, and moral innocence until it was infiltrated by corrupting influences. Ancient Greek thought also idealized a "Golden Age" somewhere in the dim past, and it, too, was conceived as a garden where food was abundant and adversity unknown. Both the Greek and Hebraic roots of Western culture agree that man originated in a garden setting of benevolent nature, and that subsequent civilization is in some sense a debased condition intended to punish man. When he was expelled from the benevolent garden, man went forth to build the ugly and hostile cities where he now suffers.

Efforts to regain the lost garden as a refuge from urban life have long occupied our minds. We dream of safe natural settings which will provide the comfort and repose which are lacking in the city. Such nostalgia for nature is common in our time, but it is also found strongly among the urban aristocrats of ancient Rome. The Roman poet Virgil is remembered not only for *The Aeneid*, but also for his pastoral poetry which glorifies the peace and simplicity of the rural countryside in contrast to the anxieties of urban life in Rome. And Juvenal, a Roman satirist of the second century A.D., speaks of "Rome, the great sewer" because of its pollution problems, then proceeds to a long list of other Roman miseries, including degrading poverty in the ghettos, high taxes, inflated prices for poor goods and services, corrupt government, crime and vice in the streets, pressures of social conformity in the suburbs, and poor schools run by wicked teachers. Juvenal's advice to weary Romans is "Tear yourself from the games and get a place in the country" where life will be easier, safer, and more sensible. Our culture has long agreed with Juvenal and Virgil that city life degrades man and that the country restores his sense of dignity; in the city man is controlled, but in the country *he* controls. Rural settings have symbolized both the purity of nature and the power of man since the beginning of the Western cultural tradition.

It may seem a paradox that the love of nature has been strongest in those civilizations which have produced the largest cities and the most complex technologies. From ancient Rome to modern America, nature has been thought of as a place of refuge from the problems of civilization. Within that tradition, humans have expected to find in natural settings a reaffirmation of human worth and purity. Like Adam and Eve in their garden, park visitors often feel their personal sanctity when they enter natural surroundings, and they feel the loss of sanctity when they return

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to the profane life awaiting them in the city. Nature is not sacred, but humans feel sanctified by their contact with nature. Such attitudes are not to be found among hunting and agricultural cultures like those of Africa and the American Indians, where *nature itself* is thought to be sacred, and where humans participate in that sacredness according to the degree of their integration with natural processes. The need to protect nature from human activities is thus strongest in those cultures where humans look upon themselves as separate from natural life, and where they see that civilization is dangerous to the natural settings they need for spiritual relief.

* * *

The recreational enjoyment of natural surroundings has been until recently a privilege reserved for aristocratic classes. Since Roman times, only those who enjoy wealth and leisure have been free to escape the pressures of the city. The great park lands of Europe were originally established as royal game preserves and forest resources from which commoners were strictly barred. British common law held that wildlife and forests belonged to the crown, as Robin Hood discovered when he poached the king's deer. The American translation of this tradition specifies that wild lands and animals belong to the people as a whole, but the idea of state ownership was long established by European monarchs before America appeared on the scene.

Early settlers in North America looked upon the land as a natural refuge from the oppressive cities of Europe. America was thought of from the beginning as a gigantic garden or wilderness park where humans could regulate their lives according to the principles of nature rather than the whims of kings. America *was* a national park in the minds of our founding fathers, but one which existed for the benefit of all the people rather than merely for a handful of royalty.

Yet, strangely, the aristocratic view of gardens remained alive as our early history unfolded. The leaders of the American Revolution were members of a new kind of aristocracy that was also based upon land ownership. They shared the view that a social utopia would be created if the values traditionally associated with gardens and farms could somehow be fused with the needs of civilized life. Thomas Jefferson envisioned a civilization which would draw its moral strength from the people's attachment to the land. In Jefferson's words, "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God . . . whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue." Jefferson, of course, was not thinking of the American Indians or of the black slaves who labored in the earth of the plantations, but rather of farmer-landowners like himself, the pastoral gentlemen who owned and managed the American garden. Jefferson connected both moral virtue and political rights to land stewardship exercised by landowners. The slaves and Indians, no matter how close they might be to the land, were excluded from Jefferson's vision and from the Constitution which he and his fellow proprietors created.

* * *

Jefferson also feared the intrusion of a snake into the American garden, and he knew that the snake's name was industry. Leo Marx's revealing book, *The Machine in the Garden*, traces Jefferson's anguish as he fought the development of manufacturing and industry in the hope of preserving the garden qualities of America. Jefferson even argued that America should export raw materials to Europe for manufacture and then return finished products to the American market, rather than developing factories on the garden soil of America. He knew that the machine and the garden were incompatible.

Jefferson's hopes for retaining a garden America dissolved, Leo Marx tells us, when the War of 1812 made it necessary to develop manufacturing in the interests of national defense. Like Adam in the Garden of Eden, America then fell from its state of purity, and Jefferson wrote in his diary that "Our enemy has indeed the consolation of Satan on removing our first parents from Paradise: from a peaceable and agricultural nation, he makes us a military and manufacturing one." Expelled from the garden by the two-headed snake of war and industry, we proceeded to build more and more machines in the garden, but Americans have never lost their sense of nostalgia and regret for the pastoral peace left behind.

The middle years of the nineteenth century were devoted to the machine and to the conversion of the wilderness garden into an efficient farm. Power and wealth appeared along with cities and industry, and America became more urban each year as it overwhelmed the natural wilderness with mechanical progress. Those who still cherished the dream of a garden America then organized themselves to preserve some part of that vision from the encroachment of machine America, and the national park idea was born in 1872 at Yellowstone.

America's National Parks are expressive of a myth that has been present in Western culture for some four thousand years. They are National Gardens of Eden where we can feel close to the origins of human life and to the peace, innocence, and moral purity that myth ascribes to the pre-fallen state of mankind. They are also places to seek refuge from cities and machines, offering us the psychological relief (the literal meaning of re-creation) which makes it possible to continue our work in unpleasant urban surroundings. They are remnants of the Jeffersonian dream of a garden Utopia, comforting for the evidence they offer that there are still a few places where the machine has not yet spoiled nature. And somewhere within us, they also feed our aristocratic ego by showing the world that we are rich and powerful enough to afford gardens. All Americans can think of themselves as kings who control vast game preserves.

* * *

It is a source of some embarrassment and concern to National Park Service officials that the Parks have

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never appealed equally to all the people. Poor people, black people, and ethnic minorities generally show little enthusiasm for the park idea. Despite recent strenuous efforts to bring "Parks to the People," the parks stubbornly remain essentially playgrounds for middle-class citizens.

The reasons behind minority indifference toward National Parks are largely unexplored, perhaps because indifference doesn't demand to be understood as strongly as hostility does. No minority groups really hate the parks, but none seem to care much about them either. Recent attempts at cultural self-appraisal by thoughtful black and Indian writers offer some insight into the lack of enthusiasm for parks displayed by American minorities.

To begin with, it is important to remember that the Myth of the Garden is not a cultural property of either African or American Indian traditions. The mythologies of both cultures assume that the civilized structures of human life are perfectly compatible with systems of nature, and both emphasize that the adaptation of human affairs to natural processes is one of the essential responsibilities of civilization. Before Africa and Indian America were influenced by the intrusions of European civilization, neither had ever heard that nature is a place of refuge from the evils of civilization, or that the present state of humanity represents a fall from an earlier state of purity symbolized by the garden. It is thus no wonder that the great national parks created by white men in Africa and America have always been difficult for the natives of both places to understand. Their inherited mythology simply does not support the idea of separate value systems for nature and for humanity.

In addition to their varying cultural mythologies, the red man and the black man have more practical reasons to hold different views of the American wilderness than those common among white Americans. For the past few centuries, both groups have learned in pain that their association with the land is a source of misery and humiliation, not of peace or fulfillment. Black and Indian values today not only lack the pastoral garden imagery reflected in the National Parks, but both are in some ways actively hostile to that imagery.

Shortly after his release from prison in 1968, Eldridge Cleaver wrote an essay called "The Land Question and Black Liberation" in which he pointed out that one of the more important consequences of slavery in America was that "black people learned to hate the land." The American land was a place of punishment and imprisonment for slaves, not the source of liberation that white settlers found in it. From a black point of view, Jefferson's idyllic image of the nobility of rural gardens was thus completely reversed. The history of black people in America has tied them to the land with hatred, not with love, and with servitude rather than with ownership. That is why, according to Cleaver, "one of the most provocative insults that can be tossed at a black is to call him a farm boy, to infer that he is from a rural area or in any way attached to an agrarian situation." Since the end of official slavery gave blacks some small mobility, they have "come to measure their own value according to the number of degrees they are away from the soil." The city and its symbols, Cleaver concludes, are more likely to attract black allegiance than any images of nature.

Black efforts over the past few decades have been concentrated on the struggle for social justice and for political power, not for relief or for a pastoral retreat from pain. When refuge is needed from that struggle, black people are not likely to look for it in any wilderness setting, but among other black people where they can expect to find understanding and human compassion. Nature, parks, and wilderness are terms which rarely appear in black vocabularies. A search among scores of recent books by black authors reveals no reference or index entry concerning National Parks or wilderness lands. For most black people, the word *park* refers to an urban setting containing basketball courts, baseball diamonds, and perhaps a lawn for picnicking. The only wilderness of any concern is of the kind found in cities, the wilderness of the ghetto.

Indians, too, need to be free of the images historically imposed upon them by the white man. Vine Deloria, one of the most articulate Indian spokesmen of recent years, summed up the traditional white view of both blacks and Indians: "Negroes were considered draft animals, Indians wild animals." White images pictured the slave as a domesticated animal laboring in the American garden, and the Indian was thought of as a wild brother to the deer, the antelope, and the other creatures who were at home on the range. When National Parks were established to commemorate the white conquest of the American wilderness and its wild animals, Indians were of course included. So now we can see bears at Yellowstone, wolves at Mt. McKinley, Hopis at Grand Canyon, and Navajos weaving blankets at many National Monuments of the Southwest.

The National Parks are places of humiliation for Indians who are displayed and exploited there. The curio counters are piled high with cheap imitations of Indian artifacts to be sold as trinkets to white tourists, and in the evening the naturalist's lecture is likely to begin with a brief description of the quaint Indians and other animals who used the park lands before the white man arrived on the scene. Many of the parks specifically glorify the white conquest over Indians or commemorate the white appropriation of Indian lands. Even the few preserved Indian victories are monuments to white dominance, as at Custer Battlefield where it is shown how the Indians won the battle while losing the war. As the plantations remind blacks of both past and present causes for shame, so the parks often recall to Indians the destruction of their cultural heritage.

* * *

It is small wonder, then, that neither blacks nor Indians show enthusiasm for National Parks. The usual explanation for their disinterest, common among sociologists and National Park Service officials, is of course

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also pertinent: blacks and Indians are generally poor people who can ill afford the time or money needed for enjoyment of nature, and neither group is likely to find much pleasure in the hiking, camping, photography, and nature study which attract middle-class whites to the parks. But even if blacks and Indians could be "taught" to appreciate park lands in the same way that many white people do, and even if both groups could somehow be provided sufficient wealth and leisure to visit the parks regularly, only the protruding tip of an enormous iceberg of indifference would have been melted. The larger influence of established cultural values which disagree with those of white Americans would not have been touched.

Can the great wilderness parks, then, be of any benefit to black and Indian minority groups in America, as Park Service officials now say they would like them to be? Perhaps not, except in the relatively superficial matters of providing inexpensive recreational space without discrimination for those few blacks and Indians who may choose to use the parks on weekend outings. The deeper emotional and cultural needs of both groups are unlikely ever to be satisfied in the sense that the parks satisfy Americans of European ancestry. Neither blacks nor Indians are ever likely to find the Garden of Eden in Yosemite Valley as other tourists do. Attempts by the National Park Service to attract minorities to the parks assume that these groups will find them pleasant and meaningful in the same way that white middle-class visitors do, but that assumption is most likely false.

The National Parks have not so far been involved in the great struggles between races and economic classes which have characterized recent decades—to the good fortune of the parks. It is possible to imagine, however, the advent of a sad day when the wilderness parks might become just one more symbol of white American exploitation, as white banks and businesses now are to many young people of racial minorities. The parks do represent white American values, not universal human values, and there is no reason for them to be held sacred by groups who may choose to oppose those values. A bit of plastic explosive in Old Faithful would go a long way as a protest demonstration. The features preserved in the parks are delicate and difficult to defend against those who do not willingly respect them. If it should ever become fashionable to bomb and burn the national parks, we will have reached a profound and perhaps irreversible level of cultural and racial warfare. The very values which Americans have attached to the parks have made them vulnerable symbols of white exclusiveness, and so subject to such attacks.

But the National Parks need not be thought of as Gardens of Eden to be tended primarily for aristocratic or middle-class relaxation from toil, or as symbols of white man's conquest over nature or over his fellow man of whatever race, or as playgrounds useful for relief or distraction from urban social ills. Their most important values may lie instead in the integrity of the wilderness ecosystems which are protected within them, quite apart from any emotional needs they may satisfy for the American people. Wilderness ecosystems are capable of maintaining their equilibrium without human laws or intervention, and they represent our best source of information about the necessary preconditions for long-term survival of complex living communities. It is perhaps time now to look to our parks for the knowledge that is inherent in their natural structures rather than for relief from the private fears which we bring into them from somewhere else.

Social justice and environmental stability are the two urgent needs facing American policy in the remaining decades of this century. Often their demands seem mutually exclusive, as when minority groups demand new industrial developments which will produce more jobs and more pollution, or, conversely, when attempts at population control are regarded by racial minorities as white genocide directed against them. As the implications of both movements begin to unfold more fully in public, positions of neutrality between them will be more and more difficult to hold. The National Park Service, like most federal agencies, has so far elected to respond to the demands for social justice made by racial minorities, for that demand has been voiced most powerfully. The parks are increasingly expected to play a role which responds to legitimate social demands, even if a few demands of nature must be sacrificed in the process. The pendulum of Park Service policy, which has always swung precariously between "preservation" and "recreation," seems now to be caught increasingly on the recreation side, and the imperative of preserving park wilderness must suffer accordingly. But that is a hopeless position for park policy to take, for even if it were possible for the parks to be made accessible to all oppressed people in America, many of those people would not want the parks.

Racial prejudice is an internal disease of society which has grown from faulty human attitudes toward other humans. Environmental degradation is the sad result of mistaken human attitudes toward the processes of nature. Ecosystems, like racial minorities, have now announced to the white man that they will tolerate no more of his garbage or exploitation. Though both crises have been created by the inordinate egotism of white culture with its demand for symbols of power and dominance, yet the two diseases should not be confused with one another, for their treatments must be different.

The goals of social justice will not be served by converting our best remaining examples of environmental integrity, the National Parks, into settings for mass recreation. Prejudice and discrimination must be overcome by improving the laws and customs that govern human social relationships, not merely by providing minority groups with the recreational escapes which have sometimes helped white men to forget their problems. Similarly, environmental disease cannot be treated if we sacrifice our few surviving healthy eco-

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systems to social purposes. We will desperately need parks and other wilderness lands to study for the knowledge they alone contain about the ingredients essential to equilibrium among biological species, including our own species.

Black people and Indians have much to teach white culture about both problems. Both groups have survived tenaciously against overwhelming odds because they have learned better than whites how to encourage tolerance and brotherhood among humans and how to adapt human activities to the conditions of natural environments. Both know that men must be changed in order to agree with the world, not the other way around. That is a lesson that the white man has yet to learn from his fellow humans and from the wilderness land that still persists.

—Joseph W. Meeker

Urban Ills: The Administration as Marie Antoinette

In case you missed the President's radio address on March 4th, you will be pleased to know that the urban crisis is over. Another comforting thing that city people need to note is the candor of the new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, James Lynn. The former Under Secretary of Commerce remarked when he was appointed to the top federal urban post that he knew nothing about housing beyond "owning a couple." Such pronouncements from the President and his top appointee on urban affairs should give unemployed blacks, ill-housed Appalachian whites and commuters on the Long Island Railroad a bit of perspective about situations they probably believed to be more critical than they really are.

Although the rhetoric remains the same, Administration policies and the men who direct them get worse. In terms of their effectiveness as spokesmen for a better physical and social environment, few urban experts were enthralled by Nixon's first term appointments of Robert Finch, George Romney, and John Volpe to posts at HEW, HUD and DOT. However, next to the faceless budgeteers now holding these positions, the original Nixon men look like the founding fathers.

Furthermore, during Nixon's first years the leprechaun of urbanology, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, pricked the Administration's conscience concerning welfare reform with hard data mixed with erudite banter. For the first six months after the President's reelection, the most ebullient member of the Executive Branch dealing with domestic affairs seemed to be Howard Phillips, a founder of Young Americans for Freedom. As he merrily dismantled OEO programs in view of a shell-shocked Congress, Phillips made Buckley-like sermons about the Marxian orientation of Community Action Programs.

In April, however, a federal judge barred further dismemberment of OEO, and in June, the same judge ruled that Phillips could no longer head this Office until he received Congressional approval. Recently, Nixon decided not even to seek Senate confirmation for his abrasive appointee.

The President's abandonment of Phillips undoubtedly reflects his weakened position. As I write this piece, the high tide of Watergate dampens the Administration's offenses on the domestic front. With the Ervin Committee exposing all the criminal activities hatched within the Administration, Nixon dares not talk about permissive liberals, welfare chiselers, and crime in the streets. Instead of resembling a modern Calvin preaching a return to traditional morals and the work ethic, his words of last January and February sound more like the frivolous chatter of French courtiers prior to the collapse of the Ancien Régime.

All this seems to bode well for Congressmen who seek to address urban America's physical and social ills. Nevertheless, a President who vetoed legislation to stop the bombing in Cambodia while John Dean still sat testifying, will probably cling to his domestic stances. A man who isolates himself from the Watergate hearings in the solitude of his Washington, Florida, and California bastions will most likely "hang tough" with his urban-Vietnamization program.

Insulated by the point of view that urban America faces no crisis, the President is prepared to gut dozens of programs in order to close the curtain on the national approach to social problems. The assaults on OEO and Model Cities, the current freeze on housing funds, and the budget cuts in other HEW, HUD, DOT and Labor programs mean a loss of millions of dollars in specific aid for every major city. Tragically, the fate of these activities affects city dwellers more than it does the political combatants or journalists involved in the conflict. Away from the Washington stage that features this verbal duel between New Deal-Great Society advocates and Nixon's missionaries of 1920s Republicanism, men and women wonder whether they can keep a job, afford a mortgage, or send their child to a daycare center.

Even small cities in agricultural regions, such as Douglasville, Georgia, will feel the impact of Nixon's grip on domestic spending. Since the $500,000 earmarked for Douglasville's water and sewer program was to come from the rural

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water bill appropriations that the President vetoed in March, outdoor privies will remain a way of life on the north side of this southern town.

Cutbacks in HEW funding threaten the school volunteer programs that grew around the country during the last decade. Over two million volunteers work in such capacities as tutors and teachers aides in three thousand school districts from coast to coast. Such a movement seems to represent the kind of bootstrap effort that Mr. Nixon applauds, but it could wither without federal money to pay staffs to coordinate such philanthropic work forces.

A recent report from the City Manager's Office in Cincinnati charts the decline of many federally funded programs in one large city. Over the next year, Cincinnati will lose five million dollars in Model Cities money—a 65% reduction in this program. In terms of employment training, the city's portion of the Emergency Employment Act will drop $4.3 million over a twelve month period, and compared with its 1972 budget, Cincinnati's youth employment program decreased by 92% this summer. Not including the slash in money for the separately managed OEO programs, the Queen City confronts a thirteen million dollar loss in federal moneys currently channeled through city hall.

Cincinnati's plight is shared by most cities. In Milwaukee, the wholesale reduction of categorical grants means that urban renewal and neighborhood development plans are whittled down to ten percent of their former scope. The freeze on federally subsidized housing blocks thousands of families from obtaining adequate shelter.

* * *

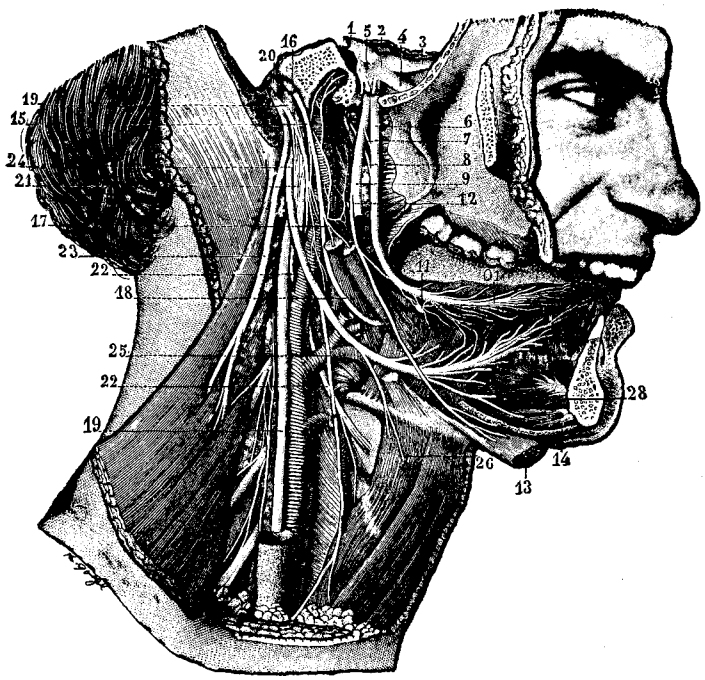
The goal of the 1968 Housing Act to build 600,000 low to moderate income housing units a year was attacked as inadequate by many reformers, but the 472,000 subsidized units built in 1971 came closest to reaching this annual objective. Although fully aware of the flaws in HUD's programs, non-profit housing corporations sponsored by churches and philanthropic groups studied the laws in order to qualify for various subsidies. Just when the non-profit organizations were experienced enough to have an impact on deteriorating neighborhoods, the Administration immobilized them with the freeze.

In Cincinnati, developers and non-profit sponsors involved in rehabilitating old housing for low income families declared that the freeze involved $75 million worth of mortgages and 5,000 construction jobs. In the Over The Rhine area, a former German district now occupied by blacks and Appalachian whites, a non-profit community group lamented that the stoppage of federal funds scuttled plans for $5 million worth of housing for an estimated three-hundred families. In Washington, a housing corporation established by the Urban League shelved blueprints for 900 units, while the Mayor of Milwaukee mourned the postponement of plans for 840 residential structures to be built as part of a neighborhood revival project.

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

Pathways of Afferent and Efferent Impulses

FIG. 322.



Tentative identification of current nerve pains causing patient's nervous condition (as of May 3, 1973) 1. C.r.p. root of current trouble. 2. Ganglion of Dean. 3, 4, 5. Branches of Hunt, LaRue and Liddy. 6, 7, 9, 01, 12. Suspected pain center of McGovern, Muskie, Woodward, Bernstein and Mollenhoff. 11. Ganglion of Mitchell. 13. Muscle of Ehrlichman. 14. Muscle of Haldeman. 15. Ziegler nerve. 16. Ganglion of Magruder. 17, 18. Branches of Petersen and Colson. 19, 20, 21. Pneumogastric of Gray. 23. Segretti nerve. 24. Chapin nerve. 25. Collector of Stans. 26. Vesco branch of Mardian. 28. Branches of Krogh and Young.

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The most celebrated casualties of the President's nihilistic new deal are Model Cities and the Office of Economic Opportunity. Unless Congress passes legislation that survives a Nixon veto, 147 model cities projects across the country face a year and a half of further federal funding at 50% reduction. Then, local or state governments must allocate moneys for the programs or these experiments in neighborhood planning that received $450 million in 1972 will end.

Since many of its activities will be transferred to other departments, OEO's demolition is difficult to assess in precise terms of money and programs. Nevertheless, the purge conducted by Howard Phillips damaged both damned and saved functions. It is also clear that "citizen participation" as symbolized by Community Action Programs will die.

How does the Administration justify its actions? Although the President finds it demeaning to answer the questions of his subjects, he occasionally goes on radio to announce programs. His urban policy represents one aspect of a concept that he calls "the new federalism." Propped up by straw-men like "the Washington pencil pushers," the new federalism looks like a plan for overcoming distance and red tape by restoring money and power to local people. All those chaotic, wasteful, ineffective and often corrupt programs created by Ivy League eggheads will be replaced by a flow of dollars to be spent for uses that locally elected officials will determine. The thesis, then, is that Washington-run domestic programs from FDR to LBJ failed, and that this Administration will scrap the busy work of naive and inefficient bureaucrats in order to put money back in the hands of people who know the problems first hand.

In his March 4th radio address, Nixon waxed poetic about his plans to revive grassroots democracy in order to make average people feel that they can again determine their fates. The new federalism would do this by transferring money and power from Washington back to the people. Neighborhood members of Model Cities and Community Action boards probably laughed or cried when they heard these statements about eradicating the powerless feelings of local folks. When the President spoke, directives were already issued across the country to fire all neighborhood people receiving salaries for Community Action jobs.

* * *

At this point, some comments on revenue sharing, the cornerstone of the new federalism, would be in order. It seems tragic that a program that has theoretical merit and actual long-term potential should be pitted in an all-or-nothing struggle with federal categorical grants. Cities cannot afford the luxury of letting problems get worse while awaiting the outcome of an ideological dispute between Nixon and the ghosts of LBJ. Assuming that one accepts the merits of sending some money without strings back to bankrupt cities, there are still enough deficiencies in Nixon's revenue sharing plans to label them a sham.

First of all, even supporters of his policies might question Nixon's methods. Administration officials seem content to kill specific programs before anything more than words replaces them. The housing freeze, the knifing of OEO, and the other domestic budget cuts came before Congress seriously examined Nixon's special revenue sharing bills.

Secondly, when one combines the money available to cities from the already existing general revenue sharing plan and the proposed special revenue sharing bill, it comes far short of equaling the funds available to the large urban areas before the 1974 budget cuts. Mayors Kevin White and Henry Maier, of Boston and Milwaukee, and Cincinnati City Manager Robert Turner anticipate future losses of many millions of federal dollars. This loss for big cities stems in part from the complex formula for the distribution of revenue sharing funds. Money is dispersed in smaller amounts over a wider range of communities. Some towns will receive as little as $200. Thus, even if city halls used revenue sharing to maintain OEO or Model Cities programs, there would not be sufficient new money to cover the reduction from specific grants.

Ironically, many large cities aren't in a position to transfer revenue sharing funds into abandoned federal programs. The transition in Washington comes at a time of bankruptcy for most of these centers. Due to a loss of taxes to the suburbs, inner cities cannot keep up basic responsibilities like garbage removal and street repair without creating a large bonded indebtedness. A number of city halls will be legally restricted to use revenue sharing money to pay off debts and to maintain their traditional services.

This is why big city mayors tend to view the President's policies as a betrayal. They originally supported revenue sharing as an essential addition to counter mounting urban problems that could not be adequately dealt with by their financially squeezed administrations. The domestic budget bludgeoning when coupled with promises of future revenue sharing is comparable to taking the life boats away from shipwreck victims while urging them to stay afloat until a shipment of water-wings arrives.

Another question to ask concerns the quality of the governments that will receive revenue sharing funds. In the abstract, Nixon portrays competent city and county leaders spending the money now controlled by the Washington pencil pushers. In reality, economic and technological factors make a mockery of much of what comes under the heading of local government. As institutions and people disperse themselves in metropolitan and megalopolitan areas, a quagmire of city, town, county, and special district governments find that they are not structured for dealing with neighborhood or regional problems.

If a town passes an air quality law, it still must breathe the pollution blown in from an industrial park just beyond its borders. Due to their respective tax bases, two suburbs sharing a common boundary may possess dramatically different public

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services. Should such suburbs have to compete for the same factory in order to finance their school systems? Certainly the present monetary distribution formula of revenue sharing does nothing to solve the crisis of obsolete governmental boundaries and functions. If anything, it may intensify community competition and regional Balkanization.

* * *

Since Nixon justifies revenue sharing on the basis of local control and grass-roots democracy, it might prove educational to review in more detail two programs that were selected for elimination by his Administration. Is the Administration's contempt for Model Cities and OEO consistent with the new federalism?

When the Model Cities bill was enacted in 1966, it represented an effort to coordinate problem solving at the neighborhood level. Residents from a Model Cities target area and city hall were meant to form a partnership in planning and executing physical and social programs for a well defined zone. Before this experiment in neighborhood planning was fully tested, Nixon changed the guidelines of this LBJ program in 1969. The citizen participation ingredient was diluted with more federal and city hall controls, while the geographic scope of particular urban projects and the number of cities participating increased. This blurred the original intent of intensive neighborhood planning with local participants, and it decreased the money available to individual Model Cities projects. Thus, after first weakening the grassroots objectives of this pilot project, the Administration now sentences it to die as a federal program in fourteen months.

Since its creation in 1964, the most controversial aspect of the Office of Economic Opportunity was the mandate for citizen participation through Community Action Programs. Since OEO was Lyndon Johnson's anti-poverty agency, many of the citizens participating in CAP decision making were poor people. Criticism was lodged against a program that allowed the poor to possess funds and an organization to lobby for their needs. Opponents of CAP argued against this kind of grass-roots organizing, because they felt that poor whites and blacks lacked skills and the perspective to solve their own problems. Advocates of OEO countered by saying that money for Community Action Programs was merely providing an opportunity for people without economic resources to have a say in local affairs like their middle and upper class neighbors. In fact, many supporters of OEO believe that the most beneficial results of the whole War On Poverty grew out of "the participation clause" that necessitated the creation of a lot of new ghetto leaders.

When the President suggests restoring decision making to the powerless, he does not appear to be talking about Mrs. Audrey Davis, a Milwaukee community worker who once contemplated suicide because of the depression that gripped her as a welfare recipient with eight children. Nixon's grassroots orientation means more power for suburban crabgrass growers and elected officials. It would probably be useful in this analysis to have Howard Phillips define the difference between a Marxian and a non-Marxian approach to involving local people in decision making. Then we would know why CAPs are ideologically tainted while revenue sharing constitutes the "Second American Revolution."

* * *

It seems important to decorate this essentially bleak report with a few signs of hope. Two recent developments deserve attention.

In the 1970 Clean Air Act, cities were given five years to meet the pollution standards established by this law. Two and a half years later, few cities possessed workable plans, and this June, the Environmental Protection Agency issued its own blueprints for the non-complying communities. Taking the clean-air goals of the bill seriously, the Agency proposed drastic transportation changes in downtown areas across the country. Under its guidelines, downtown parking would be banned in Minneapolis, while street parking would be prohibited in Boston's business district. Gasoline sales and parking would be restricted in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and in the New Jersey portion of metropolitan New York City the EPA directive calls for a 60% reduction in automobile use.

Mayors and transportation experts howled that EPA's criteria were unworkable, and on the face of it, their responses seem justified. So deteriorated are most urban mass transit systems, that citizens would now have to choose between clean air and a functioning city. The car and the highway determine present housing, employment, recreation, and shopping patterns, and a curtailment of automobile use would necessitate changes in all these other activities.

In moving to achieve clean air, EPA stumbled into the complex ecology of the urban crisis. The same factors that cause an air inversion in Los Angeles created its ghetto and its sprawling suburbs. It remains to be seen whether EPA will hold fast to its rulings. If it does, other Administrative departments like HUD, DOT, HEW and Commerce will have to help cities reverse trends that began back in the 1920s.

Three weeks after EPA's startling pronouncement, the Automobile Lobby received another blow. The House and the Senate agreed upon 1975 as the year when cities can begin to use their portion of the Highway Trust Fund for mass transit. Although this represents merely one step in redressing the balance between the car and other forms of transportation, it must be greeted as a good omen. At last, the fund that supplied much of the money that created our megalopolitan forms will be used to eradicate some of the worst features of these geographic and environmental blights.

This description of urban policy depicts the current situation. The impact of Watergate and the struggle between the President and Congress could change things. At the moment, a lot of important domestic legislation is closeted in Committees while official Washington listens to the White House "horrors" as they emerge

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horror by horror from the Senate hearings.

It is even possible that the President will claim that the Watergate scandal was part of his grand urban strategy. Nixon could maintain that the cities remained cool this summer, because his victims of "benign neglect" were kept happy by the constant roasting of Administration officials before the Ervin Committee.

—William K. Woods

Sketches of a Kansas Boyhood

I don't remember the winter of my sixth year, but I can recall that spring, when the Kansas thunderstorms raged across the sky early every afternoon, leaving torrents of rainwater to wash through the clay gulleys. And then the next day the sun would bake the clay hard and dry and umber, so that you could trace where every rivulet had coursed down the bank to make the temporary stream that was dry several hours after the sun hit it.

Walking home the one and one-half miles from school late in the afternoon with my brother and sister, I can remember how fast the water moved along the grass-lined ditches of the fields, where the green sprouts of wheat were just visible above the furrows. We would follow a piece of flotsam in the water, as the current would catch it and spin it and temporarily submerge it, and then hurl it forward, again and again. Then the flotsam would reach, by its tributary, the high, very fast waters of the stream that ran north and south. There it would be lost to sight, and we would stand on the wooden planks of the bridge to stare at the water, until it felt like everything else was moving while the water stood still.

And I can remember the abandoned farmhouse where we would stop if the rain caught us. There we would wait on the half-fallen side porch, where we could see the lilac bushes in blossom, with the water dripping off them, and smell their scent rising all around us. And my brother Tom finding a brown rabbit caught under the woodpile behind that house, him with an air rifle, because he was eleven at that time and could have one. And I remember how he put the barrel right up against the rabbit's temple, with it quivering and struggling, but only wedging itself tighter between the boards; then how pale Tom got, and how he sat back on his heels, saying that he wanted to adjust his position, and then kicked the top board up with his foot, so that the rabbit was loose and shot out across the yard and was gone in the field. And I can remember how I was glad and relieved inside, as we went on home in the rain.

* * *

I don't remember very many of the words spoken then, but I can still see things that happened as the summer came on. My Uncle Dean, smiling and waving as he stood on the running board of his black Ford. How my father took Tom and me in our Plymouth and Uncle Dean took our cousin, Bryan, in his car and we drove the back country rutted dirt roads with the dust flying and the winged grasshoppers whirring through the weeds and the sunflowers, until we got to the general store and filling station just outside of Miltonvale.

There, Uncle Dean bought us all vanilla dairy ice cream cones, while he and my father had Cokes. And then Ronald Wodeen drove up in a truck and got out and talked with my uncle and father, laughing out of his big red face and squinty eyes, and pulling on his overall straps and bragging.

Then my uncle went into the store and came out ten minutes later with a Coke bottle, only he had uncapped it inside the store, poured out the Coke, and filled it with beer. Then he had recapped the bottle and brought it out to Ronald Wodeen, who was a Baptist deacon, and like just about everyone else thought that it was a sin to drink beer. My uncle uncapped it with a bottle opener and handed it to Ronald, who did not even look at it, but just said thank you and clutched it in his big meaty hand. He drank from it, and for a split second looked startled. Then he choked because he had half swallowed, and spit the beer out on the oil-soaked ground of the station. He still was not sure what had happened, until he saw my Uncle Dean laughing and slapping his leg. Then he was sure and took after Uncle Dean and almost had him, only Dean was lighter and quicker and ran clear up the road around the bend, leaving Ronald Wodeen, winded, behind him. Ronald yelled after him that he would wait until Uncle Dean came back to the Ford and thrash him good. But my cousin, Bryan, who was fourteen and could drive, started up the Ford and gunned up the road to pick up his dad before Ronald had even touched the car.

Then we all went on home, back across the prairie as the sun was setting against the contour of the land, and everyone laughed about what had happened. Uncle Dean told the story for years after that, and always laughed about it. Ronald Wodeen never liked him after that, and I thought then that he probably did not like me either.

* * *

The first part of the summer turned hot and dry and windy as the rains subsided. It was then that I remember catching a baby hawk. He had been blown down by a strong wind into the wheat field that was next to the house. My brother and I found him there, with his wings tangled in the blades of the wheat. He had stopped trying to move and was panting and looking up at us with his bead-like eyes. He had brown feathers, that were blown out by the wind, and

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he had white tufts around his legs.

We kept him in a cage in the kitchen and fed him peas and chopped meat, which he would eat, standing on one leg, using his talons to clutch the food and stoke it into his mouth. He always kept his mouth half open, panting just slightly, and glaring out at us with his fierce eyes. I liked seeing him eating that way, and growing fiercer and wilder looking. One month after we had caught him, he looked half-grown and could fly thirty yards in the wind across the wheat field, before the wind would beat him and he would have to set down. And when we would fetch him, he would be panting and looking at us with his fierce eyes, and I could feel his heart pumping hard and fast against his chest wall, as I carried him in my hand back to the easy food and the cage.

He got too big for the wire bird cage, so we built him a bigger cage out of wooden slats. Then we would take him out with a leather leash attached to his foot and let him stand on our outstretched arms. I would wear my jacket to keep from feeling his talons, but sometimes they would dig right through the cloth into the flesh of my arm and draw blood.

The hawk was growing all the time, until finally, toward the middle of the summer, we measured his wingspan at twenty-two inches, and we were afraid to let him fly completely free. So we took kite string and tied it to his leg. Then we would perch him on our arms, and he would beat out his wings right in our faces and launch himself off and start an ascent, until about thirty yards of line were out. Then he would come up hard against the line, pulling it taut, and be suspended in the air for a moment before he fluttered to the ground. Then we would take in the line, and he would be beating his wings uselessly on the ground and giving us his fierce, wild look as we took him back to feed him or let him fly out again.

Then I remember one afternoon, how my two small sisters worked out two bars from his cage to draw circles in the dust, and the hawk we had never named squeezed its way out of the cage and beat its way westward, across the wheat field into the sun. We did not see it for a long time, and at last I realized that we never would.

* * *

I can remember the mid-summer, when the Kansas heat was most intense and the stream that had been a torrent in the spring was just a trickle through the sand, and the air was dead still and heavy. Then it was that I went out in the Plymouth with my father and Tom and drove west down the dip, past the pond, and turned north on a dirt road, up onto the top of a flat hill, where the grass was seared from the sun and where you could see back south and east, a wide expanse of prairie land with patches of green trees and foliage and a mile's length of the creek that divided the wheat land from the prairie.

Then farmers began appearing in old cars and pick-ups, men with faces burned hard brown by the sun, in overalls and khaki, who laughed and joked out of their lined faces as they brought out rifles and shotguns. And my father got our single-barreled shotgun out of the trunk, while Tom brought out his air rifle from behind the seat. I still did not understand.

Then my father said it was a hunt and that I should stay in the car. The farmers, with my father and brother, started off the flat top of the hill, spreading out in a mile perimeter and moving toward the creek.

When they had gone, I got out of the car and went down the hill toward the road, but angling toward the creek, and soon climbed onto the bridge and stood waiting in the morning heat as the perimeter moved toward the creek and toward me. Now and then I heard rifle shots or the blast of a shotgun, and once or twice I heard yelps. Then I knew that they were flushing out coyotes from the underbrush and trying to kill them.

All the time, the perimeter was tightening, and the men were drawing closer to each other, the creek, and the bridge. Pretty soon there was a space about the size of a football field left between them and the creek, so that I was a hundred yards or so from the farthest man.

Then I saw a coyote leap from the underbrush and dash for the creek and there was the explosion of what sounded like a hundred guns. The coyote leapt in the air and fell and rolled several times, and I could see a wound bleeding away in its flank. But it was up again and zigzagging toward the creek, with the guns popping off as it ran, and I could see its tongue lolling out of its mouth as it made for the safety of the other bank. Then there was a shotgun blast and its face exploded red, while it kept running for a full ten yards smack into the middle of the stream and then dropped and lay quivering, with the blood spreading out on the water, until someone came up and finished it.

Up close, they could tell it was a bitch that was suckling, so they went back over the ground where they had flushed her out and found her pups and shot them. Then someone started to skin off her pelt for the bounty. I left and ran back up the hill toward the car, and I was crying as I ran and saying over and over "the bastards," because that was the worst thing that I knew to call them, and I was hating Tom, and I was hating my father for being with them.

When I got to the car, I cried for the next half hour, until I heard Tom and my father coming up the hill. Then I stopped because I was ashamed. Tom looked very pale and my father had that grim, tired look on his face that he got when things had not gone well. I just looked away so they couldn't tell I had been crying, and I didn't say anything, because I could tell how they felt. Then we drove off the hill and down across the creek, and we were home before noon.

* * *

I remember other things about the middle of that summer, too. There was the heat that you could see shimmering far off over the hard-packed dirt road, which steadily increased through the afternoon and did not go away with the evening, but stayed right through the night. We

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would sleep in our shorts without even a sheet over us, and still the sweat would stick on us and keep us awake.

I slept with Tom in the gabled upstairs room that overlooked the porch. The room was hot as an attic in the heat of the mid-summer nights. One night I climbed out onto the porch and slept there for a while to escape the heat. I cushioned the shingles with a quilt, but could still feel some of their roughness on my back. There was some breeze, with the stars full out and dashed across the sky. The cool air felt good, with the slight breeze that beat against me and with the stars in the black night. But Tom leaned out the window and said that he thought he had seen a bat come over, and that it would land in my hair and suck my blood. Then I was scared of every sound and could not sleep. I stayed out for a while, but the feeling did not pass, so I went back through the window and into the heat.

The next morning the rays of the sun, with the dust motes floating in them, woke me. My father and mother drove the Plymouth into town to buy linoleum, taking my two small sisters with them. Tom and Annie and I walked barefoot in the dust and the heat to the clay hills, where we looked for Indian arrowheads. While we were out the heat rose and, with it, a hot, dry wind that I could feel on my neck.

When we started back, Tom would run ahead, kicking up the dust, so that we could not stay up with him and would always be in his dust. Then he would stop and let us catch up to him, and laugh at us and taunt us to stay with him, but we never could. By then the wind had broken completely, so that there was just the afternoon sun, and the heat enclosing us. I could feel the heat flush my face and neck, and then the dull throb in both my temples slowly coming on. I could see Tom on the crest of the hill before me and Annie running toward him, and I ran after them both. Then there was the intense pounding inside my whole head, worse when I ran, so that pretty soon I could not run anymore, and both Tom and Annie were way ahead of me. Then I could not see well anymore, with the road and the fields and the sky blurring and shimmering like the heat. My head was pounding so, I had to stop, and I went to the roadside and held myself up against a fence post, and vomited again and again until nothing more would come, and there was just a hard, twisted knot in my stomach. And still my head was pounding, with the heat shimmering all around me.

Then Tom and Annie were beside me, and Tom was holding my arm to pull me along, with Annie leaning in against me to help support me. Tom was not joking or ribbing anymore. They helped me all the way back to the house, and had me lie down on the cot, and Tom brought a cold wash cloth to put on my forehead. He stayed by me, so that when the wash cloth got warm, he would take it and re-wet it and wring it out and put it back again, so that it was always cool.

Then the pounding was not so bad, and the flush was gone, and pretty soon I fell asleep. When I awoke, it was dusk and my parents were standing over me. The pounding was gone then and things were not shimmering anymore. I told them how Tom had taken care of me. I remembered the way he had cared for me for a long time, and felt good about him after that.

* * *

I can remember, later that summer, the heat of the corrugated metal roof on the soles of my bare feet and the view from the top of the shed, the line of the barbed wire fence rambling south and the glinting contour of the wheat field that seemed to rock the earth as it rolled in and out of the hollow to spread out on the horizon.

Tom stood beside me on the shed and pulled at my shirt tail and told me not to go near the edge, because father was going to fix Rover. But I didn't understand and stood on the edge with my toes curled over the sharp line of the metal border. Tom stayed behind me and kept a hold on my shirt tail. Our bitch, Queen, who was pregnant, was shut in the shed below us and whimpered.

Before the shed, the smooth, parched clay of the driveway led to the dirt road that ran east and west. The house was to the left. Then, like a dream, I remember father being there in the driveway, leading the hound that was white with brown patches, and Rover following stupidly, his eyes glinting red in the sun.

In the drive, without looking up at us, father pushed the dog to a lying position while Rover looked woefully up at him, waiting for his belly to be scratched. Father lashed the dog's hind legs with the leash, holding him still with a knee on his rib cage. He tied his forelegs with a ragged strip of towel. Then he took the butcher knife from his belt and knelt over the dog's belly, with the animal dumbly craning its neck and struggling to sit upright.

Then it was like a dream again. I watched the first deliberate strokes of the knife across the animal's genitalia, the sudden spasmodic writhing and the howl of pain as the blood spurted bright red across my father's hand and turned black as it spattered onto the clay of the drive. Still the hand held firm and the knife finished its swath and fell again, and in a moment's time there was a mangled clump of testicle, dark against the clay of the drive. Then father's knee was off the dog's neck, and Rover left a trail of blood as he dragged himself to the fence and into the yellow wheat swaying gently in the gusts of warm breeze, still with his legs lashed and a croaking sound coming from deep in his throat. And the wheat rustled gently.

Father was gone, and Tom dropped gently off the edge of the shed, holding on momentarily by his hands, swaying, and then dropping and walking up the road, kicking up the dust with his sneakers. I stayed on the shed, looking out over the wheat and up into the intensely blue sky that I had known for little more than five years.

I felt nothing, not wronged or sorrowful, or secure, or frightened, or betrayed or upheld, or threatened or angry, only that it *was*, just as I was, and that for the first time, I knew it.

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There was no right or wrong of it, good or bad of it. It was part of my world, like coyote hunts, and I knew I didn't need to understand any more than that.

I sat there in the late afternoon sun, as the shadow of the barbed wire from the fence lengthened across the clay drive and the dog's anguished yelps lapsed into sporadic snarls. Queen below me would whine sympathetically, and then the snarls would cease, to be replaced by the sound of a lapping tongue and an occasional whimper. Then I dropped silently to the tilting, rocking earth, to gather the dog's dismembered parts on a scrap of cardboard and bury them in a hole dug with a sharp stick in the soft earth behind the shed. Then, after kicking the fine dry dust of the drive over the black path of blood, I walked away from it all to the house.

* * *

First there had been the spring rains that had stopped with the summer. Then the hot period, when the Kansas earth turned to fine powder that would rise around your feet when you walked up the road, or billow from behind a moving car or tractor to settle again over the land and the houses and the people.

Then late that summer the weather began to change, so that some days it would be hot and dry, and other days the gray clouds would roil across the sky, and lightning would crack the sky right down to the earth, with the thunder following and booming across the expanse of prairie.

I can remember a day that started hot and bright, with just a finger of clouds on the horizon. Tom and Annie and I burrowed tunnels in the tall, yellow wheat almost ready for harvest, and we were lost to time. By the afternoon, the clouds were looming black over half the sky from the south. We played by the shed, and when the lightning and the wind started, we went to the porch of the house. The lightning would snap out of the clouds, at first in the distance on the horizon. Then the clouds were closer and it was dark, and the lightning was closer, until pretty soon it would crack out of the clouds and the thunder boom out right on top of it. I was afraid of it and wanted to go into the house, but father was there, sitting on the porch and looking into the sky, and so I stayed.

Then I can remember a dark, funnel-shaped cloud dropping out of the cloud bank, and moving fast, winding back and forth, toward the house; and Tom opening the cellar door, father lifting me down the steps into the dark, and my mother climbing down the steps with a blanket under her arm and hustling the girls down before her. My father shut the cellar door without coming down, and I ran and stood on a chair by the south wall to look out of the dusty cellar window for him. I remember how dark it was, and how my father stood in the yard, facing the wind that was blowing scraps of shingles and leaves and dirt. I could see the funnel still winding down toward us, and I began to cry. My mother grabbed me off the chair, but I climbed back up, gripping the dusty sill, to watch my father and the tornado.

Then it veered off to the east, disappearing as rapidly as it had come. The wind that had whistled in the cracks of the cellar door died fast as soon as the funnel was gone, and father opened the door to let us out. When I got out into the light, and saw him standing there, I began to cry again, and I clenched my fists hard, making the knuckles white. I wanted to beat my fists against his legs and ask him why, but I just ran into the house and left them standing there in the yard. For the rest of the day, I stayed there alone. Sometimes after that, when the sky would darken with thunder clouds, I would be afraid like I had been then.

* * *

I can remember the dry stubble of the field by the house after the wheat had been harvested, how it rolled away to the north and west in an even contour. That was late in the summer, when the rains started every afternoon with violence.

Then it was that we came home in the mud after the car had bogged down on the country road that was a deeply rutted morass after weeks of continual storming. We had taken off our shoes and socks and rolled up our pant-legs and let the mud suck at our feet as we tramped up the road to cross the creek that was again high from the rains, and we went on up the road past the wheat fields, the evenly cut blond stubble of chaff after the summer harvest.

We were all together then, in the mud, my parents carrying my two small sisters, while Tom and Annie and I played, making designs in the mud with sticks, as we moved toward the crest of the hill that signalled the last part of the walk home.

Tom saw it first, the gentle curl of smoke from the rooftop blended with the overcast of the sky; it meant nothing to me until I saw my father and brother running for the house, two hundred yards away.

I ran too, and by the time we reached the yard, we could see smoke coming from the upstairs windows and licks of flame breaking through the shingles of the roof. Then I remember the whole house burning and my father rolling the tanks of propane gas from the side of the house and Annie crying for her doll and my mother saying to throw ourselves in the mud if there was an explosion and my brother and father tearing away the boards of the front porch with an axe and crowbar to save Queen's pups that were just weeks old.

Then there were neighbors there, who wanted to go in the house to pull things out, but my father said no. The roof caved in and we watched the house collapse into a heap and burn into the night and I began to cry when it fell and cried until my mother took us to a neighbor's house and cried even then, as I looked back to see a heap of burning rubble glowing out of the darkness with only the brick chimney still standing. Then I stopped looking and went to sleep.

I came back a month later with my father in the heat of September. It was dry again and the roads were lined with hard ruts that jolted and swayed the car as we came up the road and sighted the place where the house had been. I got out of the

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car and stepped among the charred ruins of the house, while my father tied a rope around the chimney. Then we hitched the rope to the bumper and pulled the chimney over so that bricks and fragments of mortar fell flatly into the ruins. It was over, and that time was gone for us.

We drove back down the road, into the hollow and across the creek that was low again in the dry heat. In the shallow, sand-bottomed stream, I could see the carcass of a coyote. We drove on up the hill, past the fields that looked so open but were enclosed by barbed wire, and I was suddenly glad to leave.

—Wilson Lucas

LEROY SEARLE

HOG BUTCHERS OF THE WORLD

First, they plunk them in the head.

They had a truck
with a boiler on it
and a block and tackle
over the tank.

But first they had to plunk them in the head.

You never knew how close to the ground
they are.

Then their black rubber aprons
turn red
and the grass grows pale
with the mountains they hid
inside.

Then into the water, where the bristles
melt, and the sound of the knives
makes all beards holy forever.

They end up with this empty
pink thing
about the size of my father
hanging up long and clean.

I watched them every time
it never changed.

Carl Sandburg never told you this.
You'd have to be there
one time
to be grateful
for the clothes you wear.

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LEO J. HERTZEL

OF BICYCLES & BUSES & OTHER MOVING THINGS

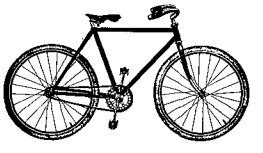
Richard and Sandra Fletcher left Berkeley in 1968 and moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin, where Richard accepted a position as professor of biology at the university.

"We wanted to get away from California," Sandra is saying. "Life out there was getting too complicated—too many cars, too many freeways. It got so you couldn't get around. Really. And then they started making you register in advance before you could camp out for a night in a state park. They'd sort of started rationing nature and we wanted something simpler, some place where there's trees and hills that haven't been all wiped out with concrete like they're doing in California. I guess we're nature buffs, but anyway we thought what better place to live than La Crosse? It's on the river. It's a beautiful town with lots of trees."

Sandra is sitting in the restaurant of the Ramada Inn in Madison, Wisconsin, eating blueberry pancakes and talking very fast about La Crosse, the proposed new freeway that may cut the city right in half, mass transit systems, the effects freeways have on a sense of community, the highway trust fund, the mental processes of highway engineers—all subjects she knows a great deal about. She has come to Madison in April to participate in a meeting called "On Balance—A Transportation Symposium" sponsored by the Wisconsin Coalition for Balanced Transportation.

Sandra is a small, shapely woman who might be in her waning twenties. Dressed in a simple white wooly pantsuit with a pink collar, she looks more like a "Just show me the Jerry Silvermans, please" model than a transportation-nature buff. She has a round, pretty face and she looks directly at me as she eats and talks about how she and her friends have been leading a citizens' campaign to block construction of the freeway that would cut La Crosse in half.

"The trouble with the way people plan these things," she is saying, "is that they don't take into consideration human needs. Really. A highway engineer sets up a traffic counter on a street somewhere and he gets some kind of car count and he says, 'Ah, we'll need a six lane express-



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way here,' but he doesn't consider what those things do to the sense of community, to natural neighborhood lines that have grown up over lots of years. I know it sounds square to say this, but those expressways can just smash the pleasant way of life in towns, like the idea of trees.

"My girl friend and I drove the whole proposed route of this freeway one day—we just put our kids in the car and started going along counting the trees they'd have to cut to build this thing, 1,254 trees. And the churches, some right beside where the freeway'd be. How would you like to meditate in a church with the noise of a six lane super-highway outside the door?"

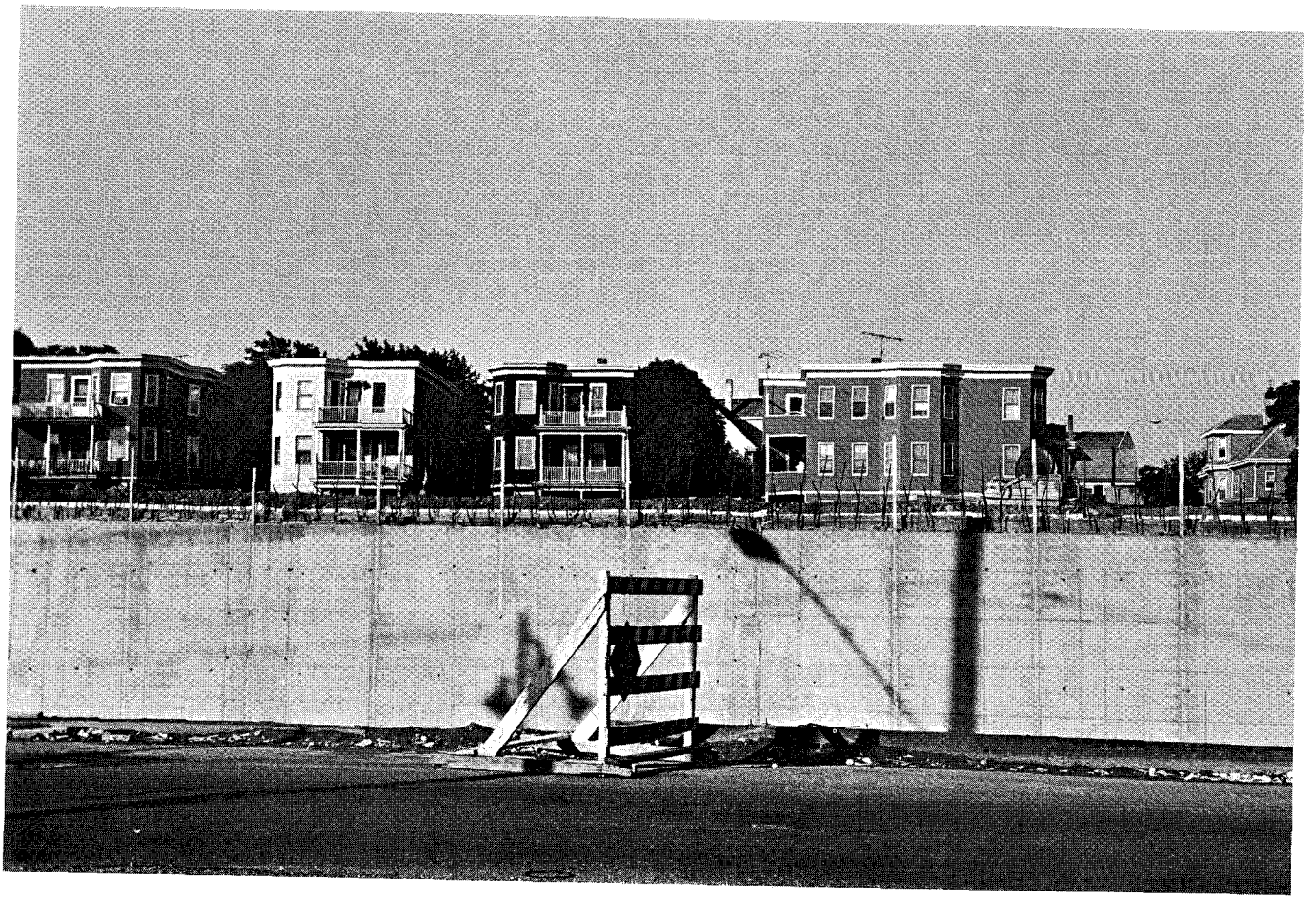
She is finishing her coffee and she reaches down and begins to look for something in the briefcase beside her chair. "We organized a meeting of La Crosse people. We went house to house and told the people what would happen to their way of life if they didn't organize to stop this freeway. We had a pamphlet."

She hands me a small pamphlet, just a sheet of paper folded once. The paper has a map of the city on Page 1 with the inset "La Crosse '71". Opening the paper I see the same map but with the inclusion of a thick black scar, the proposed freeway, cutting unevenly through the city. It is labeled, "La Crosse '90?"—"It *Can* Happen Here," says the pamphlet. "At least 25 blocks of homes and small businesses will be razed. Public Hearing, Wednesday, July 28, 7:30 P.M., City Hall."

"Four hundred and fifty people came to the meeting," Sandra is saying. "I think we got a lot of people worried about what will happen if they build that road. Really, my husband and our friends and I just don't want to see La Crosse get like California. We've got to stop this before it begins."

"What do people in La Crosse, people like highway engineers, think of you and what you're doing?" I ask. "Do they think you're some kind of a nut, a radical opposing what they think is progress?"

"Well, at first I guess a lot of people did think we were radicals. You know, at Berkeley we were always conservatives and it seemed funny all at once to become radicals. But now I think that's changing. More and more people are beginning to see what we're trying to do and why, and



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more and more people are beginning to agree with us. Now I'm even friends with the District Highway Engineer. His name is Lee Schneider and you ought to talk to him about all of this. He has a very mechanical approach to building highways—he just doesn't consider the human factor—but we're still friends."

I ask Sandra if she and her friends have been successful in blocking the La Crosse freeway.

"It's not settled yet. There'll be more hearings. But we're going to keep on fighting this thing. What we're trying to convince the highway people about now is that by 1990 there won't be a need for that freeway. It's supposed to be completed by 1990, you know. But by then we won't need it at all because people are going to be using cars a lot less than they are now. The highway people keep making these projections about the increase in traffic. That's why they keep wanting to build more expressways. We've got to make them see that there isn't enough energy to go around now. The only answer is some kind of really efficient mass transit, not more highways and cars . . . You know when I was in school I just hated it. I've got a Masters in zoology and I just hated every minute I was working on it. Really. But what I'm doing now is exciting. What I'm doing is really important; it's important to lots of people in lots of ways. We've just got to make people realize that the only answer to the energy crisis and the whole transportation mess this country is in is not to build more of those California-type freeways and smash up our cities and cut down the trees. Somehow we've got to get to people like Lee Schneider and all of the people who make the decisions about spreading more concrete and make them see this isn't the answer. Maybe I *am* kind of a nut on this subject, but I don't think so. There's a lot of people here today who think the same way I do."

The things that Sandra Fletcher and people like her are concerned with are parts of an enormously complicated national problem that includes such things as the energy crisis, environmental control, the state and federal highway trust funds, the economic factor of the 28% of the non-farm work force in the country that gets its livelihood one way or another from the automobile in-

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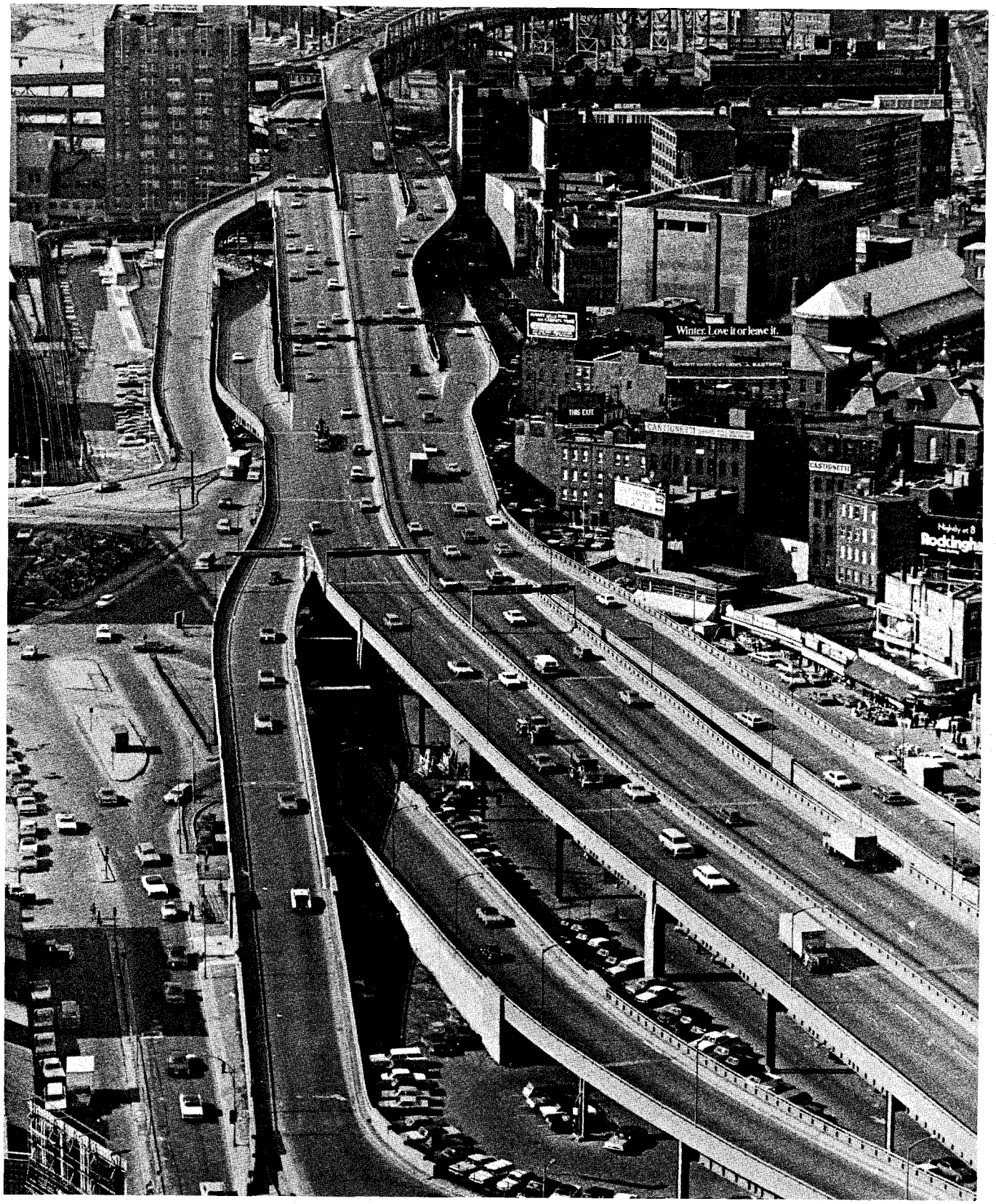

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dustry, the shaky financial condition of most mass transit systems in the nation, the political influence of powerful highway lobbies in Washington and the various state capitals, an increasingly confusing and ultimately inefficient system of urban freeways and superhighways, and finally the very life style of Americans that has become centered around the private automobile. The problem is so complex and the interests and issues so woven together it begins to seem that the only solution may be radical changes in the whole national transportation system, changes that the American people may be unwilling to accept because the changes strike deeply at the American dream, lovingly fostered by Detroit p.r. men.

Phase I Report

In April, 1972, Wisconsin's governor Patrick Lucey signed an Executive Order creating the Governor's Study Committee on Mass Transit. Citing the facts that adequate mass transit is an "urgent necessity" in the state and that most of the urban bus systems in Wisconsin face uncertain futures because of decreasing patronage and growing operational expenses, the order charged the committee—

> *To examine thoroughly the existing status of mass transportation throughout Wisconsin and determine means by which the state can best assist urban areas to preserve and improve mass transit.*

On December 15, 1972, the committee submitted to the Governor its "phase I report—an immediate action plan." In submitting the report, the committee noted,

> *We recognize, as you do, that mass transportation is an essential component of a balanced transportation system and that efforts to insure the survival of this vital element have often faltered. We further recognize that reliance on the local property tax to meet transit needs is not possible and that most urban areas, especially the smaller centers, find it difficult, if not impossible to secure federal assistance to meet capital needs.*

The report, a thoughtful and comprehensive document, is grounded in several assumptions, probably the single most important one being the inevitable decline in private automobile transportation in the coming years.

> *Anticipated shortages of energy and other negative effects of auto transportation can be expected to depress auto use and thereby force an increase in mass transit use. Highways currently being planned are based upon anticipated increases in automobile use. The design and need for planned highways shall be re-evaluated in terms of anticipated increases in mass transit use. This may mean the inclusion of exclusive transit lanes in the design of planned highways and/or excluding some highways from further consideration, especially those that would directly run counter to the objectives of urban mass transit programs.*

Wisconsin, like other states and the federal government, has at present a Highway Trust Fund. All income from motor registration and motor fuel tax must be used for the construction and maintenance of highways. (In effect, because of the attractiveness of matching federal funds, most of this money is spent on freeways and superhighways, leaving the so-called back route "bread and butter" roads to suffer.) None of this money can now be spent for such things as subsidies for mass transportation systems, studies for improved mass transport systems, the construction of bicycle paths, the salvaging of railroads.

> *However,* [says the report] *highways, airports, transit systems, railroads, pipelines, waterways and ports are all interdependent parts of the state's total transportation system, and all may play parts in efficient total transport solutions. Under existing legislation, it has been impossible for Wisconsin to produce effective public solutions to transport problems in cases where flexibility in state financial responses is necessary.*

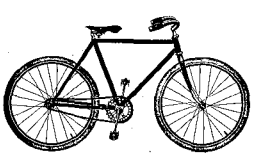
The Phase I report's most far reaching recommendation, therefore, is that the state do what is popularly termed, "Bust the Trust."

> *The existing State Highway Fund shall become a State Transportation Fund. All existing or future tax revenues paid into the fund shall be made available for all transportation-related uses. All federal grants and aids deposited with the fund shall be eligible for any transportation related use.*

Needless to say, this recommendation has run into strong opposition in Wisconsin notably from the American Automobile Association. Coalition for Balanced Transportation members enthusiastically support the resolution.

Probably the second most important recommendation of the committee is that the Governor should create a Council on Energy. The committee members had engaged in wide-ranging discussion over the so-called "energy crisis" and the effects the crisis has on such things as environmental quality. The committee concluded that no comprehensive state energy policies exist to which the people of Wisconsin can turn in attempting to evaluate the effects of particular actions on energy sources.

> *In the absence of statewide policies regarding energy sources and consumption, decisions such as the building and placement of power generating plants, or the replacement of transit systems by heavier reliance on*



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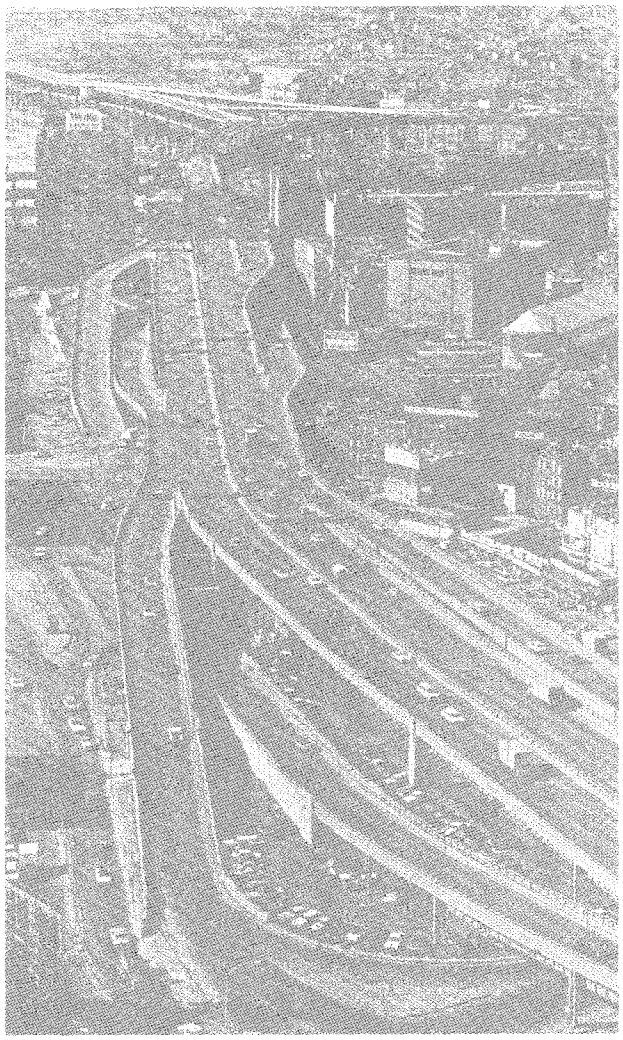

private automobiles, are made with little regard for their overall consequences on existing or potential sources of energy.

Recognizing the existence of this vacuum, the Committee recommends creation of a high level Council on Energy to evaluate the short- and long-range energy resources available to the state's citizens. A prime Committee concern would be the availability of energy for transportation programs. The recommendation, however, takes cognizance of the need for decisions on other issues to be made in the context of broader implications and consequences to energy sources. Creation of a Council on Energy will provide a framework within which informed, comprehensive decisions regarding energy can be made. That council can provide input to general state development and regulatory activities, and can serve as a liaison with appropriate national agencies dealing with the energy crisis.

It is doubtful that all of the Phase I Report recommendations will become reality in the near future. There is too much pressure on the state level as on the national level to keep things the way they are—and as Sandra Fletcher observes, "Americans are always slow to act. We seem always to wait till the last minute before we face issues." Nevertheless, the Phase I Report in just five months has come to be recognized as a kind of classic document on the transportation chaos. Several other states have already had committees make mirror reports and recommendations, though none yet has been adopted.

* * *

"How many trees did she say the expressway would get rid of?"

"She says 1,254."

"Well, she's got better figures than I have. I didn't know how many there'd be. Now, just how do you answer a thing like that?"

This is Lee Schneider, District Highway Engineer, talking from his office in La Crosse. We are talking on the telephone about Sandra Fletcher and her campaign against the proposed expressway. Schneider is patient, soft-spoken, like a man who is accustomed regularly to making impossible decisions. It is clear that he has felt the effects of some of Sandra Fletcher's efforts. Wanting to know more about the Fletcher-type mentality, Schneider even attended the April Symposium in Madison.

"I went to that meeting down in Madison," he says. "I got a better idea of what those people think now. The trouble with those people—and I think Sandra Fletcher, too—is that they're opposed to things like freeways, but they don't have any answers of their own to the problems we all have to face. There are more and more cars and if they keep multiplying the way we expect them to there's going to be a lot more freeway space needed by 1990. Doing nothing isn't the answer. Sometimes I think these people just want to do nothing, leave everything the way it is. That's no answer. And just day by day stop-gap changes aren't any good either. This freeway is part of a comprehensive plan to take care of the city's long range needs.

"I think there are some people who oppose everything. Sure, if you build anything it's going to have some kind of effect. It'll probably cause somebody trouble. But what other answer is there? Did you go to any of those workshop meetings that day in Madison?"

"Yes. I went to the one on bicycles. I learned a lot about bicycles. People want to build bicycle paths instead of streets."

"Bicycles are good things; so are bicycle paths. La Crosse is flat, a good place for bicycle paths. But they aren't going to take the place of good roads. Anyway, how many people showed up for that workshop on bicycles?"

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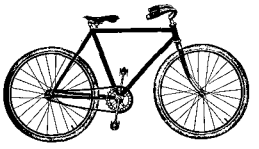

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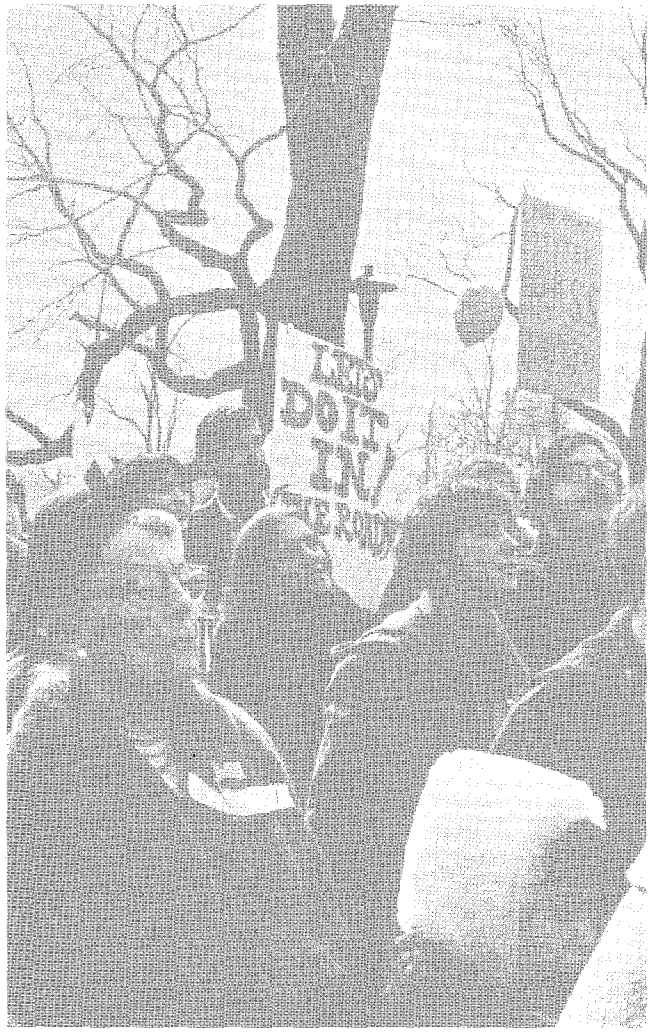

"Nineteen. There were nineteen people there. I counted them."

"I went to the one on mass transportation problems in Milwaukee. You know how many people were at that one? Four. Four people—the two fellows who were running the thing and another highway engineer and me. Nobody else showed up. I think some of these people who talk so much about mass transportation aren't really interested in it. They're just negative. But doing nothing isn't the answer.

"Get back to those trees—and did you say something about churches? How do you answer questions like that? People have to realize there's lots of different needs and sometimes they don't fit together. Sure, maybe it's bad to cut down trees. But people just won't ride buses. Not convenient. Maybe if somebody came up with a different kind of mass transit system it might work, but for now people are using their cars and it looks like they're going to keep using them. That's what we have to face and plan for."

"In addition to having transport planning reflect intermodal balance and overall socioeconomic goals, the Department of Transportation has sought to broaden public participation in the planning process and to make the latter more responsible to the political leadership of a given area. A case in point is the 'two-hearing' rule promulgated originally by Secretary of Transportation Alan S. Boyd in 1968 and still in effect. This rule requires that separate public hearings be held regarding the proposed corridor and detailed design of federal-aid highway projects instead of combining these issues in a single hearing. The new rule gives citizen groups and local political leaders much more opportunity to influence the location and design of highway projects than in the past, and for that reason is bitterly disliked by state highway interests."

Richard Barsness, "Highways and Motor Vehicles", *MSU Business Topics*, Spring, 1973.

Ronald Bracegirdle, La Crosse City Planner:

"Expressways or freeways don't cause the problem. People cause the problem. People demand things. We're going to have to have a lot of things changed here—bigger sewers, more power transmission lines, and probably the freeway. If our projections are correct, they're all going to be necessary because the city isn't going to stand still. It's changing and growing. And people demand these improvements. The habits of people are hard to change. I don't think Sandra Fletcher understands that, I don't think she *wants* to understand the long range planning process. This process is a continuing evaluation of changing facts. We take into consideration all kinds of factors in making recommendations, but it's hard to put those human factors she's talking about down in statistical form . . . . No, I didn't know 1,254 trees would be destroyed, but OK, we're just going to have to give up some things if we want others. As far as we can tell now, and our projections have been right on the line in the past, people aren't going to stop using automobiles and demanding more efficient streets and expressways. What may happen is that cars will get smaller, maybe everybody will pretty soon be driving a VW or a Toyota instead of those 450-horsepower monsters we've got now, but I think people are going to keep driving. People's habits are hard to change. Personally, I hope things do change. I don't like to see the city paved either. But I don't see the answer in blocking freeways or hoping for mass transportation, at least not the kind of mass transportation bus systems we have now. How's the bus system doing in your town?"

"Losing money," I say. "Going broke."

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Regardless of Highway Engineer Lee Schneider or City Planner Ronald Bracegirdle's feeling that concerned citizens like the members of the Coalition for Balanced Transportation take a largely negative position on the question of solutions for the nation's transportation problem, it appeared at the April Madison meeting of the Coalition that the concerned citizens in Wisconsin (and there is every reason to think concerned citizens in other states) do have some very definite goals and hopes for solving the nation's transportation problems. Perhaps these goals and plans appear impractical to men like Lee Schneider. Certainly they will encounter strong opposition from the so-called "highway gang," the highway lobby in Washington and the lobbies in the individual states. It also seems probable that the goals and plans would be unacceptable to a very large number of American motorists who have come to think of the private automobile as the very root object of the American Way of Life. "The habits of people are hard to change."

At the Madison meeting, the Coalition goals were presented by a group of speakers at a morning general meeting in Room "B" of the Ramada Inn. The room, on the second floor of the motel just off of a kind of cat-walk semi-balcony, is a drab, dark rectangle with space for perhaps 125 chairs. That morning the folding chairs were arranged in uneven rows facing a lectern and a desk with a projection screen located to the right of the desk. All of the chairs were occupied; a group of twenty or thirty overflow participants stood at the entrance door.

The people in Room "B" were an extraordinarily diverse group: business suits, crew-cuts, overalls, miniskirts, hair to the shoulders, granny dresses, jeans—college girls and old men and freaks and straights and farmers and housewives and businessmen and some indeterminate types that eventually turned out mostly to be politicians. They were the most diverse group of people I have ever seen gathered together for a common cause.

The people in Room "B" were a noisy group. Maybe everybody there (but me) already knew what was going to be said, having attended many such meetings and perhaps listened to the same speakers many times before. The lady sitting beside me, perhaps a grandmother, wearing a long dark flowered dress and an unchanging frown during the entire session, spoke up loudly from time to time, "He's wasting our time . . . . She's not giving us anything . . . . Why don't they hurry up?" No one appeared to mind these exclamations. Behind me, among the people standing and the people sitting in the last two rows, there was a constant drone of apparently unrestrained conversation. Perhaps the group's acceptance of these distractions was an indication of their willingness to accept each other's differences so that they could work together effectively for common goals.

Rebecca Young, vice-president of the coalition, delivered the opening address. A stern, thin, determined-looking woman, the hair on her head in a severe bun, she spoke in a monotone. She spoke of air pollution, the energy crisis, the detrimental factors involved in importing additional fuel from foreign countries. She noted that the energy efficiency of buses was about six times that of private automobiles. She noted that more than twenty percent of American families do not own automobiles. Though the speech was delivered with no apparent feeling, Ms. Young seemed a well-informed woman. She outlined four positive steps that she felt must be taken immediately to ease the energy crisis and to begin untangling the transportation mess.

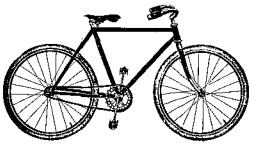
1. Increase the availability of railroad transportation. Pointing out that we have virtually let our railroad systems fall apart while developing an enormously expensive and wasteful system of freeways, she urged that federal money be spent immediately to reverse this trend. She was particularly concerned that existing railway rights-of-way not be abandoned, for they will hopefully be incorporated into a nation-wide comprehensive transportation program.

2. Parking space in metropolitan areas to be reduced substantially, thus forcing persons entering the congested city centers to use mass transit. Perhaps some form of fee or fine should be imposed on persons driving into these areas in private automobiles, especially during hours of peak congestion. [How many motorists would cheerfully accept this proposal?]

3. Divert funds now being allocated to urban freeways [like La Crosse?] to the repair of the rural, so called "bread and butter" roads which are rapidly falling into a state of grave disrepair.

4. Break the highway trust fund so that funds from this fund could be used to subsidize faltering bus systems, to initiate comprehensive studies of the over-all transportation problem, salvage the railroads [it seemed to me that Ms. Young obviously wanted very much to break the federal highway trust fund, but today she centered her remarks on the state fund].

Next, Robert (Tony) Reynolds, Vice-Chairman of the Governor's Committee on Mass Transport (producers of the Phase I Report). Reynolds' speech was repetitious and seemingly disorganized. He accompanied his words with slides on the screen in the front of the room. The slides were lifeless; sometimes they seemed not to relate to his topic, and the machine did not function properly. Yet he presented several very positive suggestions:



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There is no shortage of statistics or facts or descriptions to document the transportation chaos in this country, the chaos that underlies the problems of Sandra Fletcher and Lee Schneider and Ronald Bracegirdle and the Wisconsin Coalition for Balanced Transportation and people and organizations like them all over the nation. Fitting facts together in this problem is a bit like trying to fit together a football field size jigsaw puzzle with several dozen pieces missing.

"Statistics show that the rate of occupancy of cars during peak load periods is down to 1.2 persons per vehicle, and at the present rate of passenger decline, by 1980 one out of every three cars will be tooling along without a driver. That wouldn't be much more absurd than the present practice of encasing one man in 5,000 pounds of steel, adding 400 horsepower and then making him creep along at five miles per hour breathing a combination of synergistic poisons."

William Ruckelshaus, addressing
the American Automobile Association

". . . the energy crisis is real. It's upon us. We're running out of oil in this country. We're going to have to limit the number of automobiles in the next five years, I believe, if we face up to the real facts. And so, I think the energy crisis is going to dictate that we stop building more highways, finish the system, and put our money now in mass transit and other forms of transportation."

Stuart Udall,
Former Secretary of the Interior

"The only thing sidewalks are used for in our town is for people to cross over them so they can get to their cars."

Panelist, Wisconsin Coalition
for Balanced Transportation
Symposium

"What we essentially decided was that we were not going to continue to build eight-lane, ten-lane, twelve-lane highways into the city of Boston. We just can't do it. We cannot continue with that. Instead, we're going to build rapid transit. We're going to improve bus service. We're going to build tunnels for restricted use of emergency vehicles, and so on. And we're going to turn the thing around and not have a total reliance for the commuter on the automobile, the way we have at the present time."

Francis Sargent
Governor of Massachusetts

"When I first heard of the Coalition for Balanced Transportation, I thought of a bunch of nuts who lay down in front of bulldozers and things like that. But instead the first representatives I met were a group of concerned farmers, very conservative people, who had fought very hard to keep a freeway from going through their land. Incidentally, they lost the fight."

Ms. Jeanne DeRose
Wisconsin Department of
Transportation

"It's getting to the point where you can't say 'fill 'er up' anymore. The nation's continuing energy crisis has caused another pinch—gasoline rationing. The American Oil Company (AMOCO) and Union Oil Co. announced today nationwide gasoline allocation programs that will basically limit dealers to gasoline at the level of last year's sales."

Newspaper story, widely
distributed and printed
in Midwestern newspapers,
Spring, 1973.

"The lion's share of oil consumption is of course by the automobile (about 42 percent), with 7 percent used for jet fuel, 20 percent by industry, 7 percent by public utility power plants, and 20 percent in home heating. Two United States Department of Transportation economists pose the question, 'Are We Running Out of Gas' in a recent DOT publication (by that name). They point out that if we use our own reserves to hold down oil imports, we would deplete them by 1987, 'an untenable position, with both national security and economic implications.' They looked at vehicles powered by electricity, fuel cells, or some other means; they considered smaller cars, only to 'inevitably' return to plans for importing more petroleum. 'Transportation is the life blood of the Nation's economy and security, and every effort must be made to keep the wheels turning. The time for platitudes (sic) and decisions for solving the impending petroleum shortage must be made now.' So much for problem solving in DOT."

Ms. Rebecca Young, "Energy,
the Sedan Syndrome and the
American Flag". *Interchange*.
February, 1973.

"Transportation in urban America is in trouble—partly because nearly everybody complains about it, partly because there is little popular will to do anything about it. When presented with proposals about city traffic, only the traditional, least radical and least restrictive proposals are favored . . . . The public appears unwilling to pay the price for better transportation."

Louis Harris, 1969
Department of Transportation study.

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1. Local areas can no longer pay for mass transit. Most urban bus systems in the state face an uncertain future. The state must enact emergency legislation to subsidize and preserve the systems now in operation so that there will be a system or systems to work with later, after some comprehensive study of the entire transportation problem is made.

2. There is an urgent need to train people to run efficient bus services. We need an educational program to train people from administrators to drivers to make the use of mass transit more comfortable and convenient for the public.

Mr. Reynolds was asked a number of questions, perhaps the most pointed of which concerned the best method of getting rid of civil servants in the state capitol who have been entrenched for twenty years or more and who oppose the kinds of proposals he was making. The question drew laughter and applause, but no substantial answer.

There followed what was billed as a "debate," but was, in effect, a kind of paper lion performance that was difficult to take seriously. Called "Strategies for financing mass transit—a debate," the chief participants were State Senator Douglas LaFollette and Arthur Wichern of the American Automobile Association.

"The Highway Trust Fund is not sacred!" LaFollette said. A handsome, energetic young politician, LaFollette was a favorite with the crowd. He joked with them, "We've got to get people to realize that riding buses is fun—think of the things you can do on a bus: eat an apple, read a book, meet a girl." He was earnest. Not only the state but also the national trust fund must be broken. This money must be used for general transportation purposes: bus systems, transportation studies, new methods of mass transportation. But this is not enough; this is only the beginning. He would abolish the present state and federal gasoline taxes (the source of the Highway Trust Funds). He would abolish the sales tax. He would abolish all taxes except a graduated income and property tax, the only equitable ways for governments to raise money. Much applause.

Completely self-confident, he was the favorite of the crowd—possibly the most popular man in the room—and he knew it. Apparently nearly everybody in the room (except Arthur Wichern) wanted to break the highway trust, and here was a clever, articulate young man telling them what they wanted to hear, telling them how to do what they wanted.

Then Wichern spoke for the American Automobile Association. It seemed that he did not take his role entirely seriously. Here he was, alone in the camp of the enemy, facing their fearless champion. Wichern went through the motions. Pointing his finger at the audience, he accused, "You people are out to destroy the automobile!" No one denied the accusation. He agreed that mass transportation is a necessity, but it should absolutely not be financed by money obtained from gasoline taxes. That money properly belongs to projects that benefit the automobile user, specifically to projects like highways. It is unfair to the automobile owner to use the money for anything else. He cited statistics from an AAA survey that seemed to indicate the majority of AAA members do not want trust money used for anything but more highways. In a curious string of limp metaphors he ended his presentation—we must remember that the Highway Trust Fund is not a golden apple waiting to be plucked, it is not the goose that lays the golden egg, it is not the pot at the end of the rainbow. He sat down.

They were waiting for him. LaFollette challenged the survey figures, angry questions came from the crowd. People rose to denounce the AAA, to announce that they had cancelled their membership in the organization because of its stand on the need for additional highway construction. Wichern, apparently having been through all of this many times before, appeared to enjoy the whole thing. He answered irate members with friendly, quiet responses. He appeared relaxed, comfortable. Maybe he was even enjoying himself; he laughed a lot. Clearly his arguments had been weak. He was a foil for the brilliance of LaFollette. But Wichern seemed not to mind; he knew he didn't have a chance when he went there.

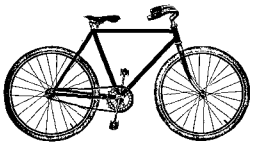
Lunch. Meat loaf, potato, pie.

From the speakers' table, Sandra Fletcher introduced Madison Mayor-elect Paul Soglin, twenty-seven-year-old liberal who had campaigned on a platform that included mass transportation improvements in the city. "We're going to get those ten new buses for Madison," he said. "In this city it's a civic duty to ride the bus!" Much applause.

"How many people in this room today came here by bus?" At least one hundred people were in the room. Twelve people raised their hands.

A report from the Governor's office: unfortunately, it seemed unlikely that many of the Phase I recommendations would be recommended personally for passage by the Governor. However, the report certainly would be presented to the legislature. The Governor's office has asked the Phase I Committee to draft legislation proposals based on the committee's findings. William P. Dixon, Legal Counsel to the Governor and one of Senator McGovern's former presidential campaign managers, was the speaker. While the Governor will not necessarily actively support these kinds of recommendations, he certainly will not oppose them.

The Wisconsin Highway Trust Fund seemed secure, at least for another year. Without the Governor's vig-



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orous support, the Phase I Report recommendations had little chance of being given much serious consideration. The trouble with you people who support the Phase I Report, said Dixon, is that you haven't got any muscle. You need a lobby, a strong lobby. Everybody mixed up in this problem has a lobby. In fact, you've got to learn that every faction in the state has a lobby—even people like bartenders have a lobby—everybody has a lobby. You've got to get muscle, and right now you don't have much. Muscle is the thing in politics. That's how things get done in our democratic system.

(Thinking back about the morning's proceedings, I decided Dixon had a point. Except for LaFollette's performance, the morning's session had been curiously flat, the speakers earnest but lifeless, the slides blurred, the audience interested only at infrequent intervals. Everything seemed structured by well meaning amateurs. They would have to get some professional muscle if they were going to move things around.)

Directly across from me at the luncheon table was an elderly man, gray hair and a tightly buttoned checkered shirt pinching his thick neck. When Dixon finished speaking of muscle, the man looked at me and smiled, smiled the way everyone at the coalition meeting except the vocal grandmother smiled at each other, as if we were all together in this thing regardless of our other differences, "That fellow's just right," he said. "Muscle. That's the only thing that counts. This year three percent of the national money for transportation problems goes for mass transit. Seventy percent goes for more highways. I'm a farmer, been a farmer all my life. Highways are good things, but now we've got to start something else. That's why I'm here today, drove all the way down from Bayfield. People here keep looking at my name-tag and saying to me, 'You from Bayfield? Where's that?' It's so far north nobody around here ever even heard of Bayfield. But no matter where you're from these days you start to realize that things can't go on the way they've been going the past few years."

I smiled back. Where'd he get those statistics? Did he say he *drove* down? I said something like, You're sure right, muscle. I ducked out of the luncheon room and went to the workshop on bicycles where I learned that in terms of energy used per pound per mile bicycles are at least ten times more efficient than automobiles; they're even more efficient than walking. But bicycle paths in cities aren't exactly cheap: an off-street bicycle path in a city, six feet wide—two inch blacktop on a four inch

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gravel base—costs at least twenty-five thousand dollars a mile. And then there's the problem that ordinary citizens seem to get bicycle paths confused with sidewalks and women like to push baby carriages along the bicycle paths and a biker going twenty-five miles an hour can't always stop when he rounds a bend and there in front of him is a perambulating mother. No end to the transportation chaos problems.

Perhaps Dixon's remarks about muscle had an effect. The afternoon workshop on "Planning Legislative Action" and the three p.m. general meeting "Strategy for Success—Action Priorities" both had large attendance. The Coalition for Balanced Transportation was determined to get some muscle—if not right away, then very soon.

Phase II Report

In May, the Wisconsin Governor's Study Committee on Mass Transit considered its second report. The proposed recommendations of the report are specific and, if put into effect, would change the entire transportation system of the state. But according to Jim Peterson, member of the committee, "The problem is that these things are years and a lot of money away."

> The State needs a set of transportation alternatives which will provide all citizens with non-automobile transportation services.
>
> The State needs a single, integrated, inter-urban rapid transit system to connect all metropolitan areas of more than 25,000 population. The system, where possible, should also serve non-metropolitan areas. The year 1990 should be the target date for the system.
>
> The State needs a rapid transit system which will make tourist and recreation areas (particularly in the north) accessible without use of the automobile.
>
> The State in building transportation systems shall avoid physical and social disruptions of communities.
>
> The State should establish policies which will encourage its citizens to purchase and operate small automobiles, rather than large automobiles.
>
> The State shall design urban freeways to allow for mass transit rights of way within the freeway corridors. Freeways which have been designed without this provision, but not constructed, shall be redesigned to allow for the construction of such transit lanes.

Most probably the Phase II Report will fare no better than Phase I, at least for a time. But there is hope. "Americans are always slow to act." But there are signs that action is coming.

All of the above things happened in the spring of 1973. Now it is fall. The Wisconsin highway situation hasn't changed much. The La Crosse freeway is still an open question. There will be more hearings, but the city planners and the highway people seem still to be determined to pave. Recently community leaders in outlying towns have been bringing pressure on the highway people to speed up the proceedings and get around to actual construction as quickly as possible.

Though one state television station recently editorialized, "Gas rationing has begun locally and the days of unlimited private car use may be numbered," the Wisconsin state highway trust fund remains intact. There simply was not enough professional muscle to break it.

On the other hand, developments in the national transportation situation must eventually bring changes, even to Wisconsin. The Environmental Protection Agency is moving to effect drastic modifications in the automobile-centered American way of life: speed limits are to be reduced; parking charges in many metropolitan areas will be increased substantially; entire sections of cities may be restricted to a minimum of automobile travel; gasoline sales may be limited. Such steps must inevitably remove many Americans from their cars and thus, hopefully, reduce the need for more paving.

Perhaps most encouraging of all, the Congress this summer cracked if not broke the federal highway trust fund. Though some environmental lobbies in Washington were disappointed at the relatively small amounts of money diverted from highway projects, the Congress has allocated some of the trust fund for mass transit and urban transportation systems during the next three years. While the funds are not much more than a foot in the door, they are a beginning, a kind of recognition of the fact that a change is a certainty. It's a start.

And in the background there seems to be a kind of growing popular national awareness that a change in our way of thinking about transportation must come. Perhaps bicycles are a key, symbols of our slowly changing thoughts about moving around. Bicycle sales have taken a giant jump in the last year. Bicycle paths begin to appear in cities all over the country. A year ago I wrote an article for NAR and asked in irony, "When is the last time you heard a national advertisement for bicycles?" The idea at that time seemed absurd. Now 7-UP has a national commercial that links their drink with the fun and freedom of bicycling, the new American way, the good life on two wheels. It's a trivial thing, of course, just a soft drink commercial. But little things like that sometimes have a way of pointing a direction. □

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DC Berry: THREE POEMS

NO GIG FOR GOOKS

Buddha's really a bull frog,
And Highway #1 is his tongue.
From which he spits glittering
Mines sometimes popping up blisters
All day on the ground,
Hoping to catch the sun
When it goes down, failing,
Flicking the tongue in
And the road up, quicker
Than blinds scatter up a rope.

Hell no, Cosmo,
I'll not go out on patrol,
Not at night: though
I've taken my share of frogs,
I've no gig for gooks,

(no gig for gooks,
O, no gig for gooks).

Have Kilroy go, Cosmo,
Go and get your gooks,

I'll tease toads, turn 'em over,
Squash 'em with a boot,
But save my soul rock and roll
I've no gig for gooks.

OH LIEUTENANT, MY LIEUTENANT

Lt. Ray,
You look so rare,
So half raw and all.

Had I wings
Of the crow
I'd fly feet-fisted
To Cpt. Marvel

And caw caw caw
In his face
That you are extinct
And squawk.

BLEEDER

Poof down the Buddha
Sky flares fade
Wooly pumpkins
In my eye.

Giving my arm an elastic wrist,
I reach and pull a tongue from one.

When it will not tell me
Where the VC is which one when
He will make me become dead,

I know how all the bleeders
Feel who are not sheep;
I am Kilroy with dog tags.

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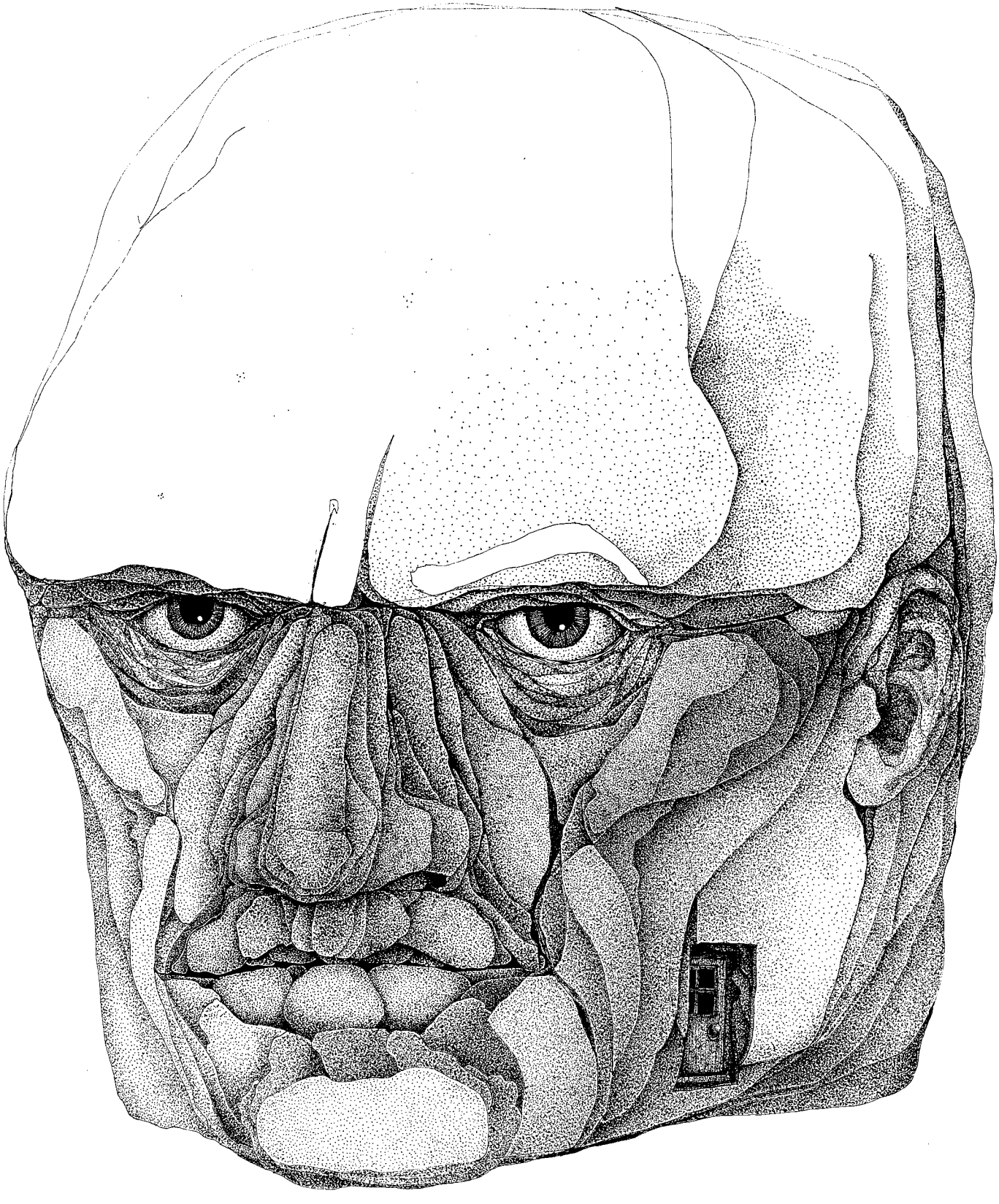

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They went to the arctic, the psychologist and the biologist, to test the scientific extension of the human body and mind. They had been intimates from childhood, roommates at the University, colleagues at the Institute. They were mutually devoted, with the chaste intellectual passion of votaries, to science. Since boyhood they had dreamed of going to some outstation where they might spend their lives together, with books and apparatus, freeing their minds of the distractions, the mortifying confusions and insignificant clutter of everyday human affairs. They had a "thing" between them, as their acquaintances put it. Themselves, they called it a perspective. They simply accepted nothing as real which could not be measured. Their object, all scientific, was to live uncompromisingly with demonstrable truth.

In the upheaval of the war, during which they had been temporarily forced apart, each was jostled into matrimony. This rather astonished those who had long observed the coolness between them and women. Not that they were so unattractive as unattracted. Both had fine presence and good incomes, but in any kind of intercourse they acted, one stymied woman described it at a cocktail party, as if they were recording into some little mechanism they carried about in their visceras. Their wives, it turned out, were intellectuals—which helped somewhat to account for the marriages—and possessed what their husbands were pleased to deem the nearest thing to masculine minds they had discovered among womankind.

Notwithstanding, while they were doing research together at the Institute their domestic equations became unbalanced by the psychologist's wife, who conceived an infatuation for the biologist, about which, such was the emancipation of the four, she was able to be not only intemperate but frank. For his part the biologist was satisfied to persuade her that her passion was simply the psychic product of glandular hyperactivity insufficiently leavened by intellectual activity. So persistent was the hyperactivity, however, that the biologist's wife, sensing herself becoming a supernumerary of the little group, struggled to retain its symmetry through the psychologist, who in his turn succeeded in bringing her to the realization that she was motivated by an unconscious feeling of rejection. Happily the husbands concurred in their separate diagnoses.

The upshot of all this perfect understanding was that each woman came to despise and adore simultaneously both her own and the other's spouse for their unassailable insight into and response to her emotional machinery. Drawn together by a common bond that also drove them apart, after a half-hearted attempt at compromise through homosexuality they eventually fell into a state of mutual torpor not unlike that of white rats whose maze is alternately shifted as soon as its pattern becomes learned and habitual. It seemed to them as if nothing ever had or ever would really befall them. They were relieved through sizeable allowances even of the pangs of survival, and through sizeable tolerances even of the desire to raise hell. As to the men, the triangle eternally estranging had instead made them so isoscelean —there was nothing their intellects together might not cope with—that they entered now a stage of yet more impregnable comradeship, in lieu of murdering or divorcing anyone.

This came as a vexation to other women, who appeared to feel that human sensibility if not decency demanded one or both of the avoided courses. They reacted

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A Story by Lawrence Sargent Hall

as one, feeling their own status threatened by the example of two men who could not be thrown into confusion by their wives. And so the wives achieved among their colleagues a certain unflattering notoriety because of their inability to create a chaos, and the husbands as well on account of their abnormally enlightened equanimity. All this disaffection could doubtless have been prevented had they offered a small if only token mess into which their acquaintances could have been drawn for advice and solace. But not realizing their obligation to the community in this as in other respects, they found themselves abandoned to their own society even more than formerly.

By a fortunate coincidence at this time the biologist and psychologist were utterly absorbed by a joint interest in the problems of interplanetary travel, particularly in foreseeing what would be the psychological and physiological responses of personnel manning future space stations—those critically poised depots in outer space. To this end they had already conducted several controversial experiments. By putting five men into a sealed vault they had succeeded in inducing nervous breakdowns of one sort or another in all of them.

The biologist, who specialized in physiology, was not at first displeased with the results. But the psychologist was anything but satisfied. He kept insisting there was something wrong in the simulated conditions. These men had every symptom of claustrophobia, and it was logical for purposes of their research to induce something quite opposite. To prove his point he got the biologist to go into the vault with him for a few days. When they emerged like guinea-pigs from a box they did a good deal of gibbering at first. But as they grew coherent they were found to be in exact agreement. Neither had been able to imagine himself anywhere except in a tomb at the very center of the earth's gravity, with all its g-forces pressing in upon him. Instead of an impression of being released from the gravitational field in a kind of free-wheeling orbit, they were able to experience only a terrible containment. Hard as they had tried they had been incapable of creating the appropriate illusion. What was missing, in the psychologist's phrase, was the "cosmic perspective," the stretching of their faculties rather than contracting, an illimitable frontier of consciousness in place of cataleptic constriction. This was the element they had to have.

How to achieve it?

The biologist, who had a salty streak in him, explained their failure in colloquial language as the inevitable result of trying to lift themselves by their own bootstraps. In simple mechanics it couldn't be done. But the psychologist argued that the mechanics they were dealing with were far from simple, that *all* illusion is a matter of lifting yourself by your bootstraps. It was a problem in anticipation of the interspace age of getting the right approximation, the right mock-up. In the end he convinced his colleague that it could be solved by devising artificial conditions close enough for the mind to make the transcending leap.

The biologist proposed a balloon floated high enough into the atmosphere to cut off all but intermittent orientation earthward. This however was less than feasible. The psychologist had a more practical alternative. For years off and on he had done research in records of polar expeditions. It struck him now that the vast arctic wastes were the nearest thing to sheer unearthly space available until the occupation of sheer space itself. He recalled one

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of the mystical lines from the diary of an explorer who had shot himself: "I am surrounded by an infinite vacuum." Though in fact, of course, he was not. "I feel my breath leave my body and my body become weightless—my abhorring consciousness is being sucked into this eternal openness, this silent, shoreless nothing . . . ."

All such material as this he thoroughly canvassed. Most of it was amateurish, impressionistic, but the statistics of one investigator recommended a framework within which to explore the psycho-physical behavior of *homo sapiens* in space. A consultant in psychology had observed on several expeditions that a single man becomes quickly disorganized, unlike Robinson Crusoe, alone on an arctic station; two men can function together somewhat longer; three men, by a continuous shifting of their personal alignments will keep themselves from a crippling imbalance for well over two years, and possibly longer depending on their natures. The consultant speculated rather romantically that a man and a woman might last indefinitely.

The psychologist and the biologist rejected the concluding hypothesis as being the merest naturalism. Moreover, if there were any value at all in the consultant's crude empirical evidence it lay in locating the area of weakness, which was the heart of the matter. You attacked the problem of human limitation at the point where it was greatest. In this case the existing data directed the focus of test upon a single man or a pair. But why not a combination of both? "Kill two birds with one stone!" was the somewhat macabre way the slangy biologist put it. Having asked themselves this inventive question they then proceeded to formulate a most ingenious plan. Initially they had some trouble making themselves understood by the members of the Space Board, owing to the innovative nature of the project, although as successful applicants for many grants they knew the absolute requirement of innovation.

"You mean to say," queried one startled member of the Board, "that you do *not* propose *not* to break down!"

"We do not propose not to," the psychologist and the biologist in unison patiently repeated.

"If it has already been proved that two men will break down," countered the Board member with a hard stare, "I must confess I fail to see the value of your proving it again."

"We must above all else be innovative. We differ from the previous experimenter-experiments," the biologist said. "They aimed at avoiding breakdown. We aim to invite it."

The Chairman of the Board twiddled his pencil in bureaucratic vexation. "I'm afraid I don't go along with this," he said sharply. "I must remind you and the Board members as well that a great deal of money is involved here, and while we stand ready to allocate it we have an obligation to ascertain that it will somehow—ah—in some way carry with it some possibility of the advancement of human capability and not merely emphasize already known incapabilities."

"The great thing is not to be spared the disease but to be able to assimilate and survive it, and therefore learn from it how to do this," argued the biologist epigrammatically. "By planning it, plan *for* it."

"This is what our predecessors did not do," put in the psychologist. "One of our contentions is, by fighting against it they may well have created additional tensions that helped bring it about and/or make it irremediable."

"If you can't lick it, join it," added his partner. "Keep the pinpoint of sanity, which is your vigil over it, and you weather it, gentlemen."

A senile member of the Board, distrusted by his colleagues because he was crotchety in his opinions and given to quoting disconcertingly from old books and dead languages, leaning forward rested his elbows on the table and his ancient reptilian face in his hands. "Young man," he inquired in a worn-out voice, "do you suggest what you are proposing is, ahem, humanly possible—*intra facultates hominis?*"

Stepping forward deferentially but resolutely the biologist detached a small object from his watch bracelet where he wore it as a charm, and laid it on the table before this old member. When the latter raised his lashless eyelids, he said: "Would you please examine this, sir? It is a tiny chunk of amber and embedded in it just beneath the surface of the flat side there is an eocene bee."

The old curmudgeon turned the amber fragment delicately like a jeweler between his wrinkled thumb and forefinger. "Ergo?" he said cantankerously.

"The amber," the biologist explained, "is millions of years old. Therefore so is the bee—"

"Excellent reasoning," croaked the old member.

"Yet you will notice that it is so like today's bee as to differ hardly at all. The bee is remarkable because he has neither become extinct nor more complex. Having hit a high level of complexity early, he has survived all the radical changes in his environment without mutation." The biologist paused while the ancient member looked up and down from him to the bee, from the bee to him, from the one, mummified in ageless sunny amber, to the other, equally shadowless in the fluorescent light of the committee room.

"Ergo—" prompted the obsolete member once more.

"So," said the biologist, "the ultimate question is, if man survives, once his environment is space, whether he will do so like this bee or by mutation."

The senile member bent his head over the amber in the manner of a pawn-broker examining a precious stone. "Fascinating!" he observed at last, returning the microcosmic gem as if he had made up his mind as to its worth.

There followed a rustling of papers and a brief consultation among the Board, which the psychologist interrupted.

"One final point, gentlemen," he said, speaking from his notes that were neatly inscribed on three-by-five cards. "Our experiment is a double one and thus more far reaching than may have been supposed. We intend to set up two identical capsules, each one looking out on space. Neither will be visible from the other and neither of us will know in what direction or how far away the other is.

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This will prevent any marginal notions of direct contact. We will communicate with each other by radio and perhaps—as I hope—by extrasensory perception. In this way we are at one and the same time both alone and together, and can experience all the conditions of each role—the singular and the dual—plus the additional conditions set up by the combination. Moreover, each role will offer some antidote to the other. The fact that we will not be exactly alone will mitigate the tensions of loneliness, and the fact that we will be in some sense by ourselves will reduce the dangers of being together."

When he finished the Board could not have been more silent if he had just offered to reproduce himself before its eyes.

"Extraordinary!" whispered the Chairman, who on account of his position did not ordinarily allow himself to be impressed. "What innovatory refinement." He cleared his throat magisterially. There was a general flurry of hands, a turning of heads, a murmur of voices.

At this juncture the senile member pressed his palms on the table, opened slightly his turtle-lidded eyes, and murmured, "Now all you have to go for, *ne plus ultra*, is immortality."

The psychologist smiled and made a graphic gesture with his hands. "You are aware, obviously, that time will slow down and life will be protracted in proportion as space travel approaches the speed of light. If the light barrier is ever passed we will have an entirely new and different universe."

The biologist instantly added: "You realize how absolutely vital it is for us to project ourselves as far into the possibility as we can, to be ready for it when and if it comes."

"*Semper paratus*," mumbled the saturnine old member. "Alas, too late for me." Lazily he moved his eyelids like a basilisk winking in the sunlight.

It was undoubtedly, as the psychologist observed later, the unexpected and bemused accession of this aged dissenter that swung the Board.

So it came about that, departing from their apathetic wives, with their gear, their superb ambition, and two infertile husky dogs for the biologist to experiment upon, they were flown into the Arctic Circle and established as they had contrived, in transparent plastic kiosks out of sight of one another, on the very top of the world. Yet they might perfectly well have been, as they had also contrived, off the top of the world. For they arrived at a season when there was no night, and the snowy horizon of their barren glacial plain was invisible in the blank light of the unsetting sun which circled them like the clockwork of eternity twenty-four hours a day. In short, they cast their consciousnesses into space that they might conquer them and it.

During the first few months each logged his observations about himself and the other with immaculate objectivity—their shifting moods and impressions, diet, amount and soundness of sleep, dreams, illnesses, varying pulse rates, even the volume of urine, and of the sweat they captured in plastic envelopes worn inside their stockings and shirts. Once a day punctually at nineteen hundred hours they faithfully communicated their observations to one another by local radio, and at twenty hundred hours on the day of each thirtieth entry in their journals they sent back to the Institute via their long range transmitters identical messages previously agreed upon.

In no time, despite their separation, they achieved together the coveted state they had come for. An early entry in the psychologist's journal, transmitted word by word at nineteen hundred to the biologist, went as follows:

. . . .The illusion has succeeded. This is as real as can be imagined. Everything has been cloudless, without contour, utterly bland. Space rolls in silent repercussions, billow upon billow, on and on. I am both possessed by it and possessing it as consciousness keeping pace fades but never vanishes. I have been sitting gazing at the sweep second hand of my watch till even the markings are meaningless, and the measurement of time in days, nights, weeks, months, and years—past, present, future—disappears altogether as in a psychedelic trance. The effort it costs me to break this perfect peace, this unadulterated bliss, in order to write, is Herculean. The whole process is like experiencing a mathematical abstraction, on the order of an incessant, soundless symphony. The intelligence simply swoons into it, but must at the same time hold relentlessly to the point of mere awareness if it is to keep itself capable of infinity. I must never fail to write, whatever else I may or may not do. Even beyond survival there is the value of the data. . . .

In his entry of the same number the biologist wrote:

. . . . This is it. My brain is nearly abandoned to a kind of schottische where it goes round and round in a vertigo to the tune of "He floats through the air with the greatest of ease/The daring young man, etc., etc. . . ," which came to me in a moment of humor a while back and has not left the spaces of my head since. Originally it annoyed me and I tried other jingles to drive it out. But since it has always been the one tune I could count on to break up any other that rang in my head endlessly like this, I had no luck. The catalyst won't be catalized. So now I am living by it. My breathing is in time with it and my pulse is beating to its rhythm. Or vice versa. On the strength of it I feel myself swooped up among transparent spheres, and am assailed by palpable giddiness, very thrilling, as if I were in fact swinging motionless one after another from shining trapezes all spun of light. I have got over thinking this ridiculous, and then being alarmed. In many respects, especially in its perfectly acceptable contradictions, this is comparable to the effects of morphine. So far it could become equally addictive. I am aware, pleasurably, of rhythm in all my arteries, particularly at the points of strongest pulse. The beat is slow but pronounced. My temperature has been subnormal—96.8; though my body feels hot my skin is cool and dry. Breathing is easy and shallow. The whole condition

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is not unlike the organic processes found in so-called hibernation. I have to be careful of this quiescent elation. not to succumb to it. Eat, keep active, preserve the lucid pinnacle throughout the fever. No matter how reluctant I am. It is my turn to call at nineteen hundred.

For some while the notations continued in this vein. Then the psychologist and the biologist began to reflect occasionally on their predecessors. What they heard in the howling winds outside their diaphanous cells were the ratlish ghosts of old explorers, huge emaciated bearded giants with frosty and maniacal eyes and tempestuous voices, who had forged their wooden ships and sledges polewards, had, in days of lesser instruments, been every way served by their dogs and men, even *in extremis* being nourished by them, then frozen to death where they slept. To surmount no more than the earth's extremity, to strive for no more than the gaining of a latitude, they had left their tell-tale cairns and bones down the decades all around the Arctic Circle, tokens of an outmoded madness for their successors to take heart and departure from.

At length almost simultaneously, and in the beginning only faintly perceptible like the shadow of the deepening polar night, there crept across the pages of their journals the phenomenon of anguish they had been waiting for. It began with the psychologist's one hundred ninety-first entry.

PSYCH. 191. *My supervision tells me I am entering a new phase, equally difficult to write about—a stage of depression and anxiety. Causes are clear and it remains to see whether acknowledgment can be sustaining. Thinking has been running along lines of astronomy. Thus. If speed of light can only be approached and never reached, then everything is always receding from our grasp. If however this barrier can be passed, a universe with dimensions wholly different from those we know will be created. But if this can be done once, it can be done again and again, from universe to universe. The mind seems to drown in infinity. There is no ultimate point of reference. All is process! Will this do? Or is it like Zeno's Fallacy? I am obsessed by these ideas. . . . Reading this over I find it a generally accurate statement of my condition. . . . Having difficulty with extrasensory perceptions. Feel them going out as always, but they attach themselves to nothing, or to shadows. At the same time my intelligence is cluttered with impressions originating within it, which must be distinguished from the true 'outside' ones. Unable to determine whether cause is in my state or* B. *is not trying hard enough. He is too much the mechanist. It remains to be seen. He turns too readily to radio. Have secured my set indefinitely to oblige greater effort. Except for transmissions to Institute. My move is vital to conditions of project—faculties must be extended. He resents it.*

BIO. 240. *I am worried about an ulcer if this keeps up. My abdominal pains are intermittent but more acute. Synthetic rations were designed to avoid this. Proof is in the eating, which I do continually to prevent acid attacking duodenum. Sent message no. 7, and this one, no. 8, to Institute independently, as did* P. *Mutual phases of experiment are disrupted by his insistence on extrasensory perception, which has failed. He blames me. I have tried. I sit thinking and thinking of him, trying to visualize something about him, without result. I agreed to this test of dependency on technology and machines, though I did not take much stock in it. This makes me very angry. But what to do about it? I must not dwell on it or perhaps he may pick up the wrong impression. My mind now keeps homing on the Institute. I must make every effort to prevent this above all. We must succeed in spite of ourselves. And there will be no success unless it is here!*

263. *Getting regular exercise is a struggle. I suffer much lassitude and inertia. Observed sky aquiver with aurora borealis, yellow and vermillion, shooting straight to the zenith and appearing to be gigantic funnel of light with a black hole at the bottom (or top?) emptying into nothing. Received distinct sensation of tumbling spirally headlong down the gyrating chute till I was pitched into obscurity through the dark nether aperture. Must have fainted, as next thing I remembered was dogs whining and licking my face. Managed to crawl back inside, but dizzy and physically sick for some time.*

271. *Physically somewhat better at the moment.* But *I have persistently recurring dream, recalling trip I took to Norway to photograph a plague of lemmings. Millions of mice-like creatures chewing and breeding their way across an entire country, through haystacks, grain bins, anything and everything that lay in the path of their mass migration, swimming rivers and lakes, surmounting or ingesting every obstacle to their search—for what? For food? They simply kept going prodigally as though no place however rich in sustenance could contain or satisfy them. Until they came to the sea, and then, apparently taking it to be another lake like those they had swum, with no sense of its size or their limits and hardly a second's hesitation they flung themselves fanatically over the cliffs. In my dream I am poised there, Colossus-like, on the brink with my camera, straddling thousands of them while they rush over my shoes, pass my feet, and hurtle bright-bellied through the sunshine into the ocean way below, where they swim away undaunted, anticipating who knows what, until they drown. The actual phenomenon suggests a natural feed-back mechanism, a kind of population control. But the dream for some reason leaves me with the desperate hypothesis that there is no "journey's end" but the great rolling sea of extinction. . . .*

The journals of the two scientists grew increasingly fragmentary as they continued. Their data dwindled and became sporadic, displaced by extravagant commentary often not too lucid, as if they were writing letters under post-hypnotic suggestion. Still they noted that these things were occurring.

Once again the sun encircled them as night evacuated space; and once again it commenced its equinoctial

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descent. Daylight had become as alien as darkness. Observations on the weather, as weather, disappeared entirely since, as the biologist wrote, "*It had no bearing. . . .*" Though with increasing frequency they remarked the wind that came in gusts like cannon booms out of the silence, and now their disordered faculties heard in its eerie reverberations tongues of a race invisible and unimaginable, shrieking like rockets round their kiosks. They had lost track of time even as a kind of exercise in astronomical arithmetic. Their only calendar was the shrinking store of synthetic rations and the accumulating entries in their journals. These last they maintained in sickness and in health with the scrupulosity of blind men counting stairs.

BIO. 571. *Drugged and ill—barely able to make this entry*—580. *Improving. More urine while sleeping than awake. Fever persists at 102.3. In delirium find I have intermittent visions of our wives. Great urgency about these I cannot seem to define. This unreality further debilitating.*

PSYCH. 583. *I have B.'s husky dog—the one for purpose of his work in fertility he facetiously named Eve. I heard it whining around at the hatch outside and when I let it in and fed it, it acted half-starved. There has been no sign of the other one. I have been trying to explain what has happened and cannot. I have no idea how far the beast had to travel to get here, let alone why she left. I judge a considerable distance because of her condition. Find myself resenting this intrusion on my regimen, and am not sure I won't close the thing out to see if it will find its way back. Perhaps at 1900 I will cut in the radio in case he tries to call. It has occurred to me this may be a ruse on his part to get me to resume radio communication. Let him try extrasensory communication if he is in such need. I am convinced eventually of some success if he will cooperate, step up his receptivity under strong motivation. He is limited—a materialist, and may be deliberately or unconsciously shutting me out. Judging from my recent behavior it is unlikely I will attempt to raise him by radio.*

Once, only once, but all unknown to one another, jointly and simultaneously they did have a portentous visionary experience in common. Somehow, though the twilight was deep and the distance indescribable, each saw the other standing alone on the opposite brink of a black fissure. The sky was obscured not as by sunset but uniformly through three hundred and sixty degrees, as if the sun hung effaced in total eclipse at the zenith. In the vast overhanging cerulean shade not a star or moon gleamed. Gradually each became aware of a presence directly in front of him, between him and the impassible fissure, less than an arm's length off. The face, keen and primeval, worked with some mute sorrow, the eyes wept, and tears coursed down the cheeks as freely as a crocodile's. Each observed the hands rise, come forward, and fall strong and weightless like the hands of God upon his shoulders. Then the hands turned him about as with one paternal arm the aged member of the Space Board drew him compassionately away and away from the lightless void that like a river profoundly flowed between them.

Both almost identically recorded this vision, which left them with the same vague nagging sense of love, bewilderment, and grief—also recorded. Yet curiously neither alluded to it in his journal again, nor seemed to regard it as anything more than a morbid hallucination.

PSYCH. 588. *I have not got rid of the bitch, which has been sleeping most of the time. This is good because when it is awake it is affectionate. Never cared for dogs. Turned on the radio and may again. Presume it is his resentment that is keeping him from calling. Then again, he may be in some kind of trouble. He was all right at the time of our last transmission home. I do not know whether I care or not. Have been reconsidering my wife's relation with him. . . .*

BIO. 595. *Fever is gone. Clear-headed but very weak. For no cause except perhaps weakness I suddenly burst into a fit of sobs. It could also be loss of the bitch. The stud returned but the bitch is still missing. I had hopes I was succeeding in bringing her into heat. It is unusual the female should run away. Am terribly depressed, not merely about the animal. Knowing it is mainly my physical condition does not help. Remembrance of my wife is comforting but vague and I cannot recall in detail. It may be I shall try the radio. Collapse in our organization could be fatal.* 597. *The bitch has not returned. Reflexes are uncertain. I lack coordination. Spilled hot water, burning left thigh, not badly.* 598. *Still no sign of the bitch. Her survival beginning to be doubtful. She was more responsive than the dog. Cannot explain her leaving with both of us here.*

Meanwhile the psychologist, sitting staring at the bitch for long periods, reported that he found it repulsively bestial. Its warm slimy tongue on the back of his hand made him almost scream with revulsion. This reaction was presently transferred into a loathing of his own bestiality as he saw in the mirror the hair growing out of his skin and nostrils, the gross curve of lips, the moist pink tongue and blue vacancy of eye. At such times all his bodily functions including eating and breathing revolted him to nausea. They used up most of his waxing time and waning energy, and his surroundings were oppressed by the results of their excretion, so that he would be overwhelmed by a sense of the inescapable depravity of his organic existence and wish to be disembodied. Decomposition was no more foul, and death and life equally dirty. But in the next instant his heart would constrict with dread, and he would get up and feed the animal.

PSYCH. 596. *I think I detest the dog, but I am getting the habit of it, of having to bother with and be bothered by it. Am almost incapable of thinking anything because there are so few images. The dog is the only living one I have. Cannot tell whether I have nothing to think or nothing to think with or about. Thought seems*

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to need concretion. What about mathematics? Suspect I cannot bear to part with dog, which now whines at the door continually as if it wanted to get away somewhere. Dare not let it out by itself.

The biologist at about this time noted his mind sinking into a kind of otherworldly stupor, shapeless and soft as cotton batting, such that he could no longer control his emotions, discover their cause or predict their course. He would be wiping tears from his face, like sweat, before realizing that he wept, and without knowing the reason. He felt himself being gradually but inexorably buried alive in darkness, as in a grave, yet managed to restrain himself from wasting his lights. Periodically breathless with fright at the direction this hallucination was taking he would scramble frenziedly back to consciousness and jot his brief tortured notes in a sullen rage and desperation that exhausted what strength he had. Then unexpectedly the turning point came.

BIO. 601. *He has the bitch! She belongs to me. I saved her life. Stud is no good to me in state he is in. Chews everything—my hands or feet, clothes, chewed up section of journal. I am afraid to let him out. . . . Wonder why I did not take his wife when she pressed me. Wish now I had wanted her. . . . Have we failed. . . ? Do not want to return home unsuccessful. Do not know what I want. . . .*

PSYCH. 613. *Long spells of semiconsciousness. I black out, then come to with palpitating shock unable to explain what has gone on or what I was doing—whatever it was I was doing. Are we approaching limits. . . ? Why do I keep that beast that slinks round and round incessantly? It has become intolerable, whining and scratching at the hatch every time it circles. Why does it want to leave me. . . ? I hate it! I have just fallen upon it and beaten it with my fists to keep it silent. At first it cowered ahead of me till I caught it by the tail and kicked it in the belly, in the head. Then I seized it in my arms on the floor and hugged it writhing, hot-breathed, rank-breathed, scrambling under my weight, till it submitted and lay still, softly whimpering. Demoralizing behavior. Should not risk being bitten. What does the poor animal want? What is happening to me?*

BIO. 616. *Am shaking with refrain of that terrifying song—'and my love—and my love—and my love he has stolen away.' Experiment disastrous. Life wasted. Do not seem to care. Must* do *something!*

PSYCH. 620. *Spells of blankness longer and more frequent. They follow flashes of memory, hateful and sweet, and are like drowning."*

BIO. 622. *Am in bad shape. Getting worse.*

PSYCH. 623. *Dog keeps bringing me back. Wants to leave. Cannot let it.*

BIO. 624. *Realized this minute what ails stud—the bitch did come in heat! Success! The old hormones will lead me there! She can't be anywhere but with him, not more than 5 to 10 mi. Can I survive? Am weak.*

PSYCH. 624. *Dog wants to get back to him. It is frantic. How can it care that much? It slinks from me, but runs round and round me, yelping. I shall have to let it go. No—I will kill it first. No—I cannot kill the dog. I need it. It is the only thing that keeps me coming back. 627. ESP at last! Clear image of him calling for me. Waiting with clothes and rations. Tried radio again. Have rope on dog. Can it take me if I will go? How far. . . ?*

BIO. 627. *Unable to stand sight of my handwriting. Sealed all previous entries watertight. Will I do anything. . . ?*

The co-pilot was the one to spot them, arrested in twilight frost as the bee is in amber, where their tracks came together where they had clutched one another in some kind of fiery contact—what difference whether of combat or embrace—and slipped in unison down the dreamless heights of glacial sleep; while the dogs, after treading the snow around them, sortied away shoulder to haunch trailing their leashes into the primeval tundra.

The co-pilot walked deliberately back to the plane and spoke to the pilot. "Give me a hand, will you, Mac?" he said. The two of them returned to the place where it had happened in the snow.

"They're refrigerated," said the co-pilot, "like a couple of Thanksgiving turkeys. Together."

The pilot stared down upon the features of monumental peace at his feet. "They're like a statue," he said.

"What do you suppose they were doing?" asked the co-pilot.

The pilot gave a shrug of mystification that lost its eloquence underneath his heavy suit.

The co-pilot knelt down. "They won't come apart," he announced, straightening.

"We may have to chop 'em up to get 'em through the door."

"I hope not," the pilot said, gauging with his eye.

"Hold on," said the co-pilot. "I'll make sure."

He went to the plane and climbed inside, while the pilot remained where he was, gazing vacantly after him. Pretty soon the co-pilot stood in the door, marking the width of its opening with a wire. He came across holding the piece of wire in the thumb and forefinger of each hand, and accurately gave the pilot one end. They then knelt down together, the pilot at the heads and the co-pilot at the feet and stretching the wire taut between them took from every angle the measurements of their cargo.

"We can work 'em through sidewise like moving an armchair," the co-pilot finally calculated, rising, while the pilot on his knees, dropping his end of the wire, looked at him as if from a great distance.

After they had collected what was important from the kiosks and taken off for home, the co-pilot gazed down for a few minutes at the brightening global icecap far beneath him. "What a way to die," he said at last.

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"What way is any way of doing that?" the pilot said.

The co-pilot said: "Nothing wrong with their communications. Radios were okay." When the pilot made no answer he said: "Seven hours back to base with this head wind." He jerked his head over his shoulder toward the tail of the plane. "You don't suppose they'll start to thaw, do you?"

"I hope not," the pilot said.

The fate of the biologist and the psychologist created an appropriate public stir. Though ignorant of the precise nature, purpose, value, and result of the venture they had undertaken, people were overwhelmed by the significance that must be attached to the fact of two men dying for progress. These men of science had demonstrated a heroic ambition as inscrutable as space itself, a kind of divine enthusiasm, unsharable, to be sure, but at the same time not altogether uncontagious. This biologist and this psychologist had been audaciously dedicated—to what, the man in the streets was not clear. Yet this he did know. Something had been done which he could not have dreamt of doing, and no one else had ever died doing anything quite like it in quite the same way.

Various groups with specialized interests and knowledge drew different conclusions from the catastrophic experiment. The Humane Society, for one, published a brochure interpreting the data as proving that even in an age of Space human destiny was inextricably interlocked with that of animals. Though for some reason or other the sale of the pamphlet was insufficient to finance the Society's projected expedition to recover the abandoned dogs.

At the Institute, the Space Board met to formulate the official evaluation of the case, once each member had thoroughly studied all the tragic records in consultation with staff experts. Extended debate was carried on as to whether space or time was the defeating factor. The argument was protracted by several experts who theorized that the two factors could not be separated.

"It looks to me," observed the senile member, who had appeared to be drowsing like an aged salamander through most of the altercation, "as if it was something else intractable—what you might call a *tertium quid*." He smiled his thin-lipped, dreary smile of condescension. "A third something." Hunching himself forward so as to give his round, sunken shoulders the hump-backed appearance of an iguana, he spoke cryptically and authoritatively as befitted one whose knowledge of extinction was actuarially closer to being empirical than that of anyone else present.

Whatever the reason for the failure of the experiment, consensus was at last reached on the positive contribution which the Institute's investment in the biologist and the psychologist had made to science, therefore to mankind. The junior member of the Board summed it up. "These men made a moving and courageous effort, in a world challenged as never before by change, to pass the human barriers. I think we must all agree that while they did not actually break through those barriers they pioneered beyond anyone else so far. You see," he pointed out, "they were their own guinea-pigs, so to speak. The ultimate organization, when and if it comes, must of course be reached, or at least approached, through experimenting with ourselves—through being both experimenter and experimented." He smiled at his felicity of phrase. Then he sat back in his chair. "This much at the least we have all learned from these two. Man must accomplish his own mutation!"

When the junior member had finished, the Chairman, without speaking, glanced appreciatively first up the table to his right, then down it to his left, counting each member's nod, till his parliamentary eye at last settled diffidently on the senile member.

"Pioneers—" echoed that sardonic old reactionary in his rasping pedantic voice.

Just as the Chairman was about to take his glance away on the assumption that this was the extent of his comment, the old one added, "Like the lemming." Looking dimly at his junior colleague he went on, with his usual crankiness. "Perhaps, like the lemming, a few of the less precocious will remain, *mutatis mutandis*, to keep the cycle going." He translated condescendingly. "The necessary changes having been made." Then for a second his maundering powers seemed to concentrate in the fine focus of a dying man. "Otherwise—" All at once he snapped his twiglike fingers so smartly in the polite silence that every one of his fellows including the Chairman started as if he had heard the crack of doom. After that the senile member subsided, letting his lids blink slowly to shield his glaucomatous eyes, which swam mistily in the fluorescent shadowlessness of the council chamber.

"One moment!" protested the junior member, tapping his stiffened forefinger correctively on the table. "There is a difference here. Individual lemmings do not test the ocean to see whether it is traversable for the multitude."

But the old lizard had grown diffuse once more and gave no sign of responding.

"I take it a majority of us is in agreement on this evaluation," interposed the Chairman. "If there is no more discussion, then, I will have my secretary draw up and circulate for your approval a statement for publication." With that he buzzed for his secretary, and when she appeared handed her the completed dossier for the files. She was gracefully and snugly clothed, and while the other board members sat abstractedly waiting to be adjourned the senile one, as he invariably did, roused himself to watch her silken legs walk discreetly in, and then discreetly out, across the quiet carpet. Afterward he again painfully closed his eyes as though struggling to fix some image or other in his memory.

As to the widows of the psychologist and the biologist, when interviewed subsequently by the press they simply sounded perplexed that their husbands, who had been notorious in life for successfully avoiding trouble over their wives, should become famous in death for failing to avoid it on account of a pair of dogs. □

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George V. Higgins

Two Cautionary Tales:

Lane said he had been sick. Donnelly said: "You're pushing forty, Jimmy. What'd you have?"

Lane said he had had a fever and a headache. He said he thought his wife had said what was the matter with him when she called in for him.

"Same as last week," Donnelly said. "You had a fever and a headache last Monday, too."

Lane said he had had the twenty-four-hour virus the previous week.

"My mistake," Donnelly said. "You get to be my age, the memory goes first. All I know is, you weren't here last Monday, either. I think Mondays're bad for you."

"Look," Lane said, "Friday night I had a four-bagger, that three-decker in Charlestown. I got soaked to the goddamned skin and it's about thirty-five degrees out there. I was sick Saturday, Sunday I couldn't even get out of bed. I felt rotten yesterday. I couldn't come in. Well, I could've come in, but I wouldn't've been any use to anybody."

"Used to be," Donnelly said, "you got sick on Thursdays."

"Oh, come on," Lane said. "I bet I haven't missed ten days in fifteen years. No, sixteen years."

"I bet you haven't too," Donnelly said. "Last year you're working nights and you had Tuesdays and Wednesdays and you missed about four Thursdays in a couple or three months with your headaches and stuff, and I went to them and I said: 'Jimmy Lane's been on nights long enough, taking the middle the week off. We owe him something, I think, right about now. Let me have him on days.' "

"I appreciated that," Lane said.

"I know you did," Donnelly said. "What the hell, Jim, we've known each other a long time. You earned it."

"Life's a hell of a lot easier," Lane said, "working days like everybody else, taking the weekends off. It's very nice."

"Sure," Donnelly said. "Only the trouble is, your health didn't improve."

"Well," Lane said.

"No," Donnelly said, "I mean it. You were on nights, Mitchell had the problem on Thursdays when you were sick. It didn't bother me so much. Now you're on days, and you get sick Mondays. Mondays, days are different from nights. Every damned son of a bitch in the world that wants his name in the paper sets it up for Mondays. And now that's when you're getting sick: when I need every body I can find. Now you're my problem."

"Quit sending me out on those fires," Lane said.

"You do a good job on fires," Donnelly said.

"Sure," Lane said, "and I get all wet and I get sick and then I have to stand here and listen. You got press conferences? I'll take press conferences for you. All you want. No more running around in the rain? I'll take that."

"Especially the ones with the hospitality hour," Donnelly said. "Right?"

Lane did not say anything.

"I had an uncle, drank gin," Donnelly said. "My father had four brothers. Uncle Andy drank gin. When he got up in the morning, Uncle Andy had a drink of gin. As the day went along, one thing and another, he had a little more gin. He was a teacher in Hyde Park, the only one of the brothers that had an education. He went to the Staley College of the Spoken Word. When he got through teaching in the afternoon, he went home and drank gin. He kept right on drinking gin until he went to bed at night. Put it down right out of the shot-glass. Only thing he ever ate was those little orange cheese crackers and cheese. Is cottage cheese the stuff that comes in the tinfoil?"

"No," Lane said. "Cottage cheese comes in the carton. That's the stuff the broads're always eating on a peach. Cream cheese comes in tinfoil."

"It was cream cheese," Donnelly said. "All I've got to do is look at cheese and I get constipated. He'd take that cream cheese and one of those dinky little crackers and a little knife, and he'd spread the cheese on the cracker, with his little finger out like he was at a tea party. Then, whammo, two ounces of gin down like it was water."

"I never drink gin," Lane said. "I used to drink Martinis but I gave them up. I haven't had a Martini for five or six years."

"You were drinking rum and Coke, the last time I had a drink with you," Donnelly said.

"No more of that, either," Lane said. "Nothing stronger than wine and beer now."

"Uncle Andy," Donnelly said, "lived with my grandmother. He never got married. She was mad as hell at him all the time. He used to complain about it. 'I might as well've gotten married, the way she's at me all the time.' Every Christmas you'd see them, all the brothers took

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their families to her house for Christmas dinner. He'd get about halfway through the morning and then it'd start to wear off. He'd start going out to the kitchen, checking on the turkey. Of course he was getting at the gin. That made her mad, and she was no bargain either, and everybody else got into the act to keep her quiet. The kids ran around and raised hell and nobody had time to watch us because they were all watching Uncle Andy. Which didn't do any good, of course. He knew where things were, because he'd put them there, and by the time everybody got through chasing him, he had a nice little edge on. I couldn't understand why everybody got so excited. He was more fun coming back from the kitchen than he was when he was trying to get out there and everybody was making a big problem for him.

"When I got to be about twelve or so," Donnelly said, "my father took me into the front room and sat me down. Uh huh, I figured he was going to tell me about the girls. But he didn't. He never did get around to that. Probably figured if I was still interested after I saw my grandmother and my mother, there wasn't anything he could do for me except hope I never found out enough to get myself into the same kind of scrape. It was booze that concerned him.

" 'You take a look at your Uncle Andy,' he said. 'Let him be a lesson to you. He had the best of any of us and he turned out the worst. I dunno why it is, there's so many Irish guys that're drunks. Maybe it's the blood, like they say. But you want some advice from me, I'll give it to you: Lay offa the booze.'

"That did it," Donnelly said. "The first thing I did after that was go and get myself a drink. I picked gin. It tasted like gasoline. I decided: I don't know why Uncle Andy does it, but he wants to do it, he can have my share."

"He drank it straight?" Lane said. "No ice, nothing?"

"Nothing," Donnelly said.

"Jesus," Lane said.

"That's what I said," Donnelly said, "when I got my voice back. I didn't take a drink 'til I was almost thirty-six years old. There's my father, dead, had a heart attack, and I'd just been to my grandmother's funeral, she was ninety-one. And the only one left to take her down to the cemetery was Uncle Andy. Three sheets to the wind and can't wait to get back to the house to get the Gilbey's out. Finally he made it. No more interference. His mother's dead. All his brothers, who didn't drink because he did, or so they said, they're all dead. He was the oldest. He was retired from teaching. Finally he could do what he wanted.

"That was eleven years ago," Donnelly said. "Last Christmas it was our turn, we have to have the dinner. Uncle Andy came. He was stiff when he got there, of course. He didn't really eat any of the turkey. Then we had the presents. I gave him a half-gallon of Gilbey's. He opened it, couldn't really believe what he was seeing, all my cousins're glaring at me, and right off we have a couple of belts for the holiday.

"He kept right at it," Donnelly said. "The kids ran around all afternoon, Uncle Andy kept right at the bottle. It got to be around suppertime, when everybody gets another crack at the bird and some cold stuffing and pickles.

"They were all out in the kitchen," Donnelly said. "Uncle Andy and I're sitting in the front room. He poured himself another one. Best I could see, he'd had about a pint and a half. So I said something to him. Nothing special. 'Nice Christmas, huh?' Something like that. I thought he'd probably like it, he didn't have to sneak out to the kitchen any more.

" 'I guess you think I'm an old drunk,' he said. 'The only thing you can think of to give me is more of the stuff. You think it's the only thing I like.'

"I looked at him," Donnelly said. "He was taking another little drink. What the hell could I say to him? It was true. I do think he's an old drunk. I do think the only thing he likes is the sauce. I said: 'Look, you outlived all the rest of them. I admire a man, does what he wants and takes all the crap you took and you still lived longer'n any of them. They should've watched you, instead of you listening to them.' He said: 'Yeah, I lived longer. But I missed a lot of it.' "

"Jesus," Lane said.

"Yeah," Donnelly said, "well, that still taught me something. This Christmas we're all going over to my cousin's house, and I talked to him and we agreed: Uncle Andy gets neckties this year, just like he used to. And he's gonna have to hunt for the gin. He'll find it, all right. I don't want a man eighty-three years old going through the DTs during my Christmas. But he's going to have to look. Doesn't do to make life too easy on a guy."

"Yeah," Lane said. □

1. Donnelly's Uncle

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2. The Original Water Course

At the willows downstream, the brook bent abruptly to the right, around a boulder rolled into the original watercourse during construction of the highway. The remains of a large red dog, its thick red fur matted with blood and gravel, lay partly in among the willows, and partly in the water. It was the head, and the long ears, that lay in the water; the body and legs rested on broken lower branches of the willows.

The boys discovered the dog as soon as the four of us emerged from the culvert under the highway. They stood silently over it for one or two minutes. Benson and I waited for them to leave it; then we continued along behind them.

We went upstream and the boys stood in the stream with the water flowing around the ankles of their new hipboots. They paid out their lines as we had told them to do. Tony Benson and I sat on a log and smoked; now and then we glanced back toward the culvert, fifty feet away. The cars went by at sixty-five, heading for the Cape.

Benson said: "Whoever he was, he was pretty big. That dog must weigh eighty pounds." After a while he said: "Of course he was probably pretty mad. Something that heavy does a pretty good job on your car. One of the guys I know at work had a deer hit him, he was driving up in Vermont, brand new Toronado, and this deer jumped the road and came right in through the windshield. He had that deer halfway out of the car when the cops got there, and that deer weighed close to four hundred pounds. You don't know what you can do, you get mad enough."

The boys believed there were fish in the brook. I had started to discourage my son, but Benson heard about it and called. He said: "My kid says your kid says you said there's no trout in that brook."

"I did," I said. "Every winter they salt down the road and it goes in the brook. In the summer it's bone dry, nothing in it but big green weeds. Plus what the office park pumps into it to keep the weeds green. God never put a trout in that brook, and if He did, it grew feet and hair three years ago and hitch-hiked off to live with its aunt in Wyoming. Besides, we'll get killed crossing the damned road anyway."

"My kid says there's a culvert we can go through from the sandpit," Benson said.

"Your kid is four feet high and so is mine," I said.

"Four feet three, actually," Benson said.

"Time flies," I said. "I'm six-one and you're five-six, both ways. We'll get stuck in the culvert and spend the spring thaw drowning."

"You take your kid fishing last year?" Benson said.

"No," I said.

"Mean daddy," Benson said. "I did. I took my kid fishing down to Otis Brook in Norwell, I used to go there every year. We had to stand in line to get in the woods. If you knew somebody you could get a place to stand on the stream. Looked like Family Night at Fenway Park, twelve thousand wet kids heaving worms at hatchery trout, poor trout starving for chopped chicken livers. It rained. There's no place to park. Can you believe that? There was no place to park in the woods, for Christ sake.

"My kid fell in, of course," Benson said. "I finally got him a hummock to stand on, I called the Governor, weren't more than thirty, forty other kids standing next to him. He was the one-hundredth kid to fall in. The man selling balloons took a count. He was only sick in bed about two weeks."

"So what?" I said.

"So maybe there's no fish in that brook," Benson said. "It's five minutes, walking, away, and nobody fishes it. I saw that last year, when I brought my wet kid home."

"Was that when you decided it was full of trout?" I said.

"That's when I remembered," he said. "That's the old meadow where I practiced my woodland craft as a boy."

"Did you?" I said. "How'd you do it? When I was a kid in Wallingford it was almost impossible to get the girls to come into the woods."

"The usual way," he said, "we lied persuasively and they knew we wanted to get their sweaters off. Since that was what they had in mind they came right along. Wagging their tails behind them."

"I was always a lousy liar," I said. "Worked like hell at it, too."

"It's all in knowing what you're doing," Benson said. "But there were fish in that brook when I was a kid. Not very many, not very big. But fish, just the same."

"There aren't now," I said.

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"You have a dull mind," Benson said. "You don't understand fishing, either. Fishing takes water. That's all. It can even be fairly *thick* water. You don't need fish. You need faith."

"Yeah," I said, "but what about my kid? He's liable to expect a fish."

"Leave it all to me," Benson said. "You just go along. Tomorrow at free-play my kid'll tell your kid his daddy's full of shit about no fish. Not in those exact words. When your kid gets home tomorrow night, you agree with him. Never mind your dignity. Then next week the four of us crawl through the culvert and both of them'll fall in by noon and we'll bring them home and give them to their mothers for aspirin and vaporizers and we can watch the Bruins and have a glass of beer."

"I hope beer cures diphtheria," I said. "We're going to catch something in that culvert for sure."

"Beer cures everything," Benson said. "It even cures taking the kid fishing. I'll get a license. We have to have one among us. You go out and spend about thirty bucks for tackle and I'll see you next week."

We had told the boys that motion and noise frighten fish. They stirred very seldom in the chill grey April sunlight. The dark brook eddied around them. Beyond the willows the brook ran into the concrete storm drains that led it away under the road again.

Benson and I talked about the tax rate and the political news and the Red Sox and the Bruins and the Patriots. We talked about septic tanks and what to put in them when the washing machine overflowed. Benson said: "I'm getting old."

I said: "I know, but what brings it on?"

Benson said: "When I was a boy . . . . When I was a boy I hated like poison to hear my father say: 'When I was a boy . . . .' That's how I know I'm getting old. I'm starting to talk like my father. 'Shut the damned door, you think I want to heat the town?' 'Turn off the lights, lights cost money.' Well, anyway, when I was a boy this was all meadow. Now road. And I want to tell you, no bullshit now, there were fish in that brook."

"And girls in the grass," I said.

"Yup," he said. "You had a hot little sophomore dropping her pants in this field now, half the world'd see her on the way to work. Never happen."

"Like hell," I said. "I saw a girl dropping her pants on the roof of one of the tombs in the Common one afternoon last August. Five-thirty on a weekday. Dirty girl, dirty pants, but still, there she was."

"I don't believe it," he said.

"I don't believe there used to be fish in this brook," I said. "I think the road was always there. The girls never went into the woods with anybody. And there was never a fish in that brook."

"There was," Benson said. "I actually caught a fish out of this brook."

"Okay," I said, "whatever you say, Benson. I'm not talking about what you did. I'm talking about what I believe. I don't believe it. Adam didn't come along early enough to catch a fish out of this brook."

"I wouldn't be surprised," Benson said, "if that was Forrest's dog."

"Hank Forrest?" I said. "I didn't know he had a dog."

"If you lived at my end of the street and you had shrubbery, you would," Benson said. "I couldn't be sure without getting closer'n I wanted the boys to see me, but that looked a hell of a lot like Tipper to me."

"If you want to check," I said, "I'll stay here."

"No need to check," Benson said. "That's Tipper. If I go, Mike'll see me. When we get home the first thing he'll do is run and tell the Forrest kids. Right now he's not sure. I'll leave it that way. Forrest doesn't need that kind of trouble, not at this point."

"Hank's got troubles?" I said.

"Hank's married to Denise," Benson said.

"I thought they got along all right," I said.

"Yeah," Benson said. "Well, you're new. He never marked her up where it'd show."

"Oh come on," I said. "Nobody whacks his wife around any more."

"You don't," Benson said. "I don't. Forrest, he might. He's married to Denise. That's a different problem'n I've got."

"What'd she do?" I said.

"She got pregnant," Benson said. "The way I get it, she came home and said the rabbit said: positive. Hank was glad and said so."

"So?" I said.

"So she got all pissed off and stormed out the door and she's with her mother," Benson said.

"Oh boy," I said.

"Yeah," Benson said. "And they got three kids, oldest, five, Hank stays and takes care of them, tells them anything he can think of, at work. He's been using up vacation for a week and a half now, taking care of those kids while Denise tells her mother what a prick he is. Then next summer she'll be back, bitching all over the place, they can't go anywhere because Hank hasn't got any vacation left, belly out in front of her like a snowplow. It ought to be interesting for the rest of us, anyway."

"Well," I said, "she didn't get pregnant by phone."

"Nope," Benson said, "she got pregnant when they went to Saint Thomas in February. Nothing like those islands in the middle of the winter for babies nine months later. Which, I figure, serves him right. Any man who takes his wife to Saint Thomas in February and lets me in for a whole lot of shit deserves whatever he gets."

"I don't know how much sympathy I've got for him," I said. "He should've known what he was getting into."

"He did," Benson said, "he knew it very well. He was getting into his wife. That's the way those things are, those islands. What the hell, you get relaxed enough, you can forget anything. A piece of ass is a piece of ass, even if it is your wife."

My son went to bed that night without catching any fish. He asked me if he should tell the Forrest kids that he had seen their dog. I said: "Better not, Tiger." □

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Albert Goldbarth

INNER TUBES

A Poem About Melting:
a candle
in a block of ice

A Poem About Hunger:
the hole from the swiss cheese
travelling through the intestines
of a white rat
running a maze

A Poem About Death:
the stanza break
in A Poem About Life and Loving

A Poem About Time:
the moon's reflection in the puddle
of river-water
a delta cups

A Poem About Milk:
a sudden bee
flashing pollen
through the empty space
a mastectomy left

A Poem About Spirit:
the oil
in the follicle of a scalp
hanging on a tentskin

A Poem About Possibility:
neon
filling the sign Motel
en route in a crate
in an airplane belly

A Poem About Prayer:
twelve stories of air rising
out of the mouth
a falling elevator
opens

A Poem About Pressure:
an unearthed diamond
comprised of a diamond
and the fist of a dead man
buried around it
and become diamond

A Poem About Joy:
the coded image
of what specific color wavelengths were absorbed
being lifted off a microscope slide
by the light
that dilates a diagnostician's pupil
to the size of a beneficent tumor

A Poem About Poems:
all that fits
in the thickness of a sheet of paper
cutting the skin

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LITTLE DEATHS

1.
The way the strain of the pupil's
inner circumference, aimed
through the camera lens, lies in state
in that small black box
hanging from your neck
each day lower.

2.
Or even the smile
seen through such focus, that slit
in the head, that invitation the face extends
for its autopsy.

3.
When you probe
your hand in my mouth
—quick! is that wriggle
exciting your palm a way of letting myself out
into the world, into your sucking
reception of my taste; or
is it only the tail
of some small burrower
even now with its claws on my ribs
and its face in my liver?
And can you be sure?

4.
As if the line of vision
were a leash, sleeping turns loose
the animal in me; and every morning I wake
with its stain
etched deeper, and yellower, into the wall
of my gut. I've never seen the beast;
and only the two-pronged vertebra plugged
bloodlessly into the brain, that
topmost totem
of my pole,
gives a clue to the white brute-face
my own face muzzles.

5.
Salud.
The spine is a press
and standing between one sleep
and another squeezes out
such a wine
from the cartilage! Such a toast
to our little deaths.

6.
To us. *L'chayim.* Here's the shot
where we raise our glasses
and feel, for the first time, blood know
it's going uphill. If I remember
correctly, someone told a joke
and everyone laughed
a small choke
around his drink. But I don't
remember the joke; and flipping
absorbedly through the album, I see
a stranger with his arm around you;
a younger man;
in my clothes, the bastard, and leaving
my fingerprints
on all the emptied glasses.

7.
And every night since then the wine
he's peed
holds so much tooth-enamel.

8.
Or my neck tingles
just where the edge of the photograph
guillotined last year's
smile off.

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A STORY BY NOLAN PORTERFIELD

And a Man Who Sounded Like Harry Von Zell

Stanley and I had just got back to the office after supper that night when the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell called. Stanley had come back to get the Crown Graphic and load some film packs. I didn't have anything to do at the office, but it was better than sitting in my hotel room or just watching people go by on the street. I was still worrying about spending nearly a dollar for supper at the America Cafe, and wondering if Stanley would let me go with him and Flores or Poby or whichever of the cops he was going to ride around with. He was always riding around with the Gallup city cops, taking pictures of car wrecks and drunk Navajos.

While Stanley clattered around in the darkroom, I edited some filler copy and wrote cutlines for Sunday's picture page. I wouldn't have answered the phone when it rang—at that hour it was always some mad old guy complaining that his paper hadn't been delivered—but Stanley yelled, "Chrissake. Pick it up, you simple butt."

The man on the phone wanted to know how to get in touch with Alcoholics Anonymous, and he spoke pleasantly, in a thickbrown baritone that called back the time before my mother died in Davenport, when a mammoth Stromberg-Carlson radio receiver filled a corner of our living room. It hovered there ominously, like some misbegotten altar of gothic dials and scrolled wood, and we worshipped before it regularly: Jack Armstrong every afternoon at five and all through the day sad ladies in hysteria set to organ music while Mama ironed and the Tuesday nights when my father ate crabapples and fought static, saying impatiently *listen, son!* to Fibber McGee and Molly and Bob Hope and the Aldrich Family and a thousand less durable fantasies, all announced and master-of-ceremonied and commercialized by crisp, velvety voices so perfect and so much alike that they seemed to have no human connection, like some strange breed of robot larynxes put together by machinists to say *brought to you by Trushay, the Before-Hand Lotion* or *thrilling days of yesteryear rode the Masked Man and his faithful Indian companion* or *courtesy Bulova—B-U-L-O-V-A—Watch Time.* Or: *your announcer has been Harry Von Zell.*

Of all the faceless, manufactured intonations that droned from our old Stromberg-Carlson, the only one who ever projected an identity to me was Harry Von Zell. His voice was like all the others—and yet somehow deeper and clearer, like the first of many impressions from a rubber stamp; and perhaps there was something in the ring of his three names, some image of aristocracy among the babble. Long afterward, when I saw a picture of him, I was disappointed, for by that time it had become an article of my faith that only a square jaw and a stiff mouth on the face of a Marlboro Man could produce a sound so wholesome and respectable and All-American.

The man who sounded like Harry Von Zell said, "I need help badly," and several years later I would answer that nearly everybody does, but in that time a new sun still rose each morning and I had some crazy idea, one that hung on a long time despite the *Gallup Daily View* and Stanley and Old Curry, that a newspaper was the place for people to call about the AA and lost cats and missing cousins and the annual Pythian Sisters Cookbook being undersubscribed. There was pride too: after a wandering adolescence of pouring linotype pigs and cleaning the presses and sweeping the floors of a dozen shirttail printshops, I finally had a paying job on a daily paper ("Fifty-five a week and all the ink you can drink," O'Neal, the publisher, loved to say), and if a cultured gentleman who sounded like a famous radio announcer had enough faith in the *Daily View* to call us—editorial "we"—I certainly didn't want him to suspect that I was associated with some hick rag. I balanced all the duties and responsibilities of the Fourth Estate delicately on my narrow, sloping shoulders, trying to scowl like Bogart in a newspaper movie I'd seen.

While I stalled, asking clumsy, illogical questions, pondering some way to help the man on the phone, he began to plead with increasing desperation. "I need to talk to someone," he said. In calmer moments he told

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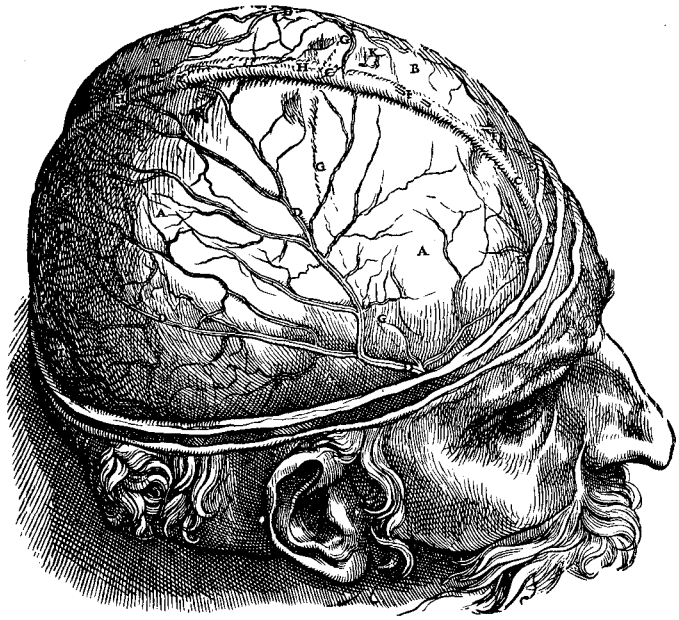

me he was just passing through town, had had a few drinks, and wanted to talk to somebody because he'd had problems with the bottle before. He was calling from a service station, he said; and the image feathered aimlessly before me . . . some lonely tourist or a traveling salesman, probably sporting goods or ladies' lingerie, tired, middleaged, a few too many for the road and now out of sadness and worry calling the AA for help, huddling nervously over the phone in an all-night gas station while the attendant services his three-year-old Chrysler. All of that, because he sounded like Harry Von Zell.

Shouldering the phone against my neck, I got out a city directory and looked for Alcoholics Anonymous. Then I remembered Stanley. I called to him, and he stuck his head out of the darkroom. "Christ no. They ain't anonymous here," he said mockingly. "Gallup rummies got pride in their work." He snickered through his teeth, but when I laughed, his face went hard. "Who's asking?"

I told him about the man on the phone, covering the receiver with my hand. "Hey, maybe here's a story," I said. "Human interest." Thinking *Maybe if I give him a hot lead he'll feel like he has to let me go with him*, thinking *Heck, I owe him something for letting me go to supper with him*. But when I said "human interest," Stanley's nose twitched under the empty little eyes.

"Chrissake. There ain't no story," he said, disappearing into the darkroom. "Just a bum."

The man on the phone must have heard him. His words were still carefully measured, but I felt a rising urgency in his voice. I told him I would try to find somebody to help him, maybe a minister or a doctor—

The man cut me off, suddenly high and violent, laughing bitterly: "That's exactly what I need! That's it! Someone to pray and someone to . . . sign a death certificate." Then he said, softly, defiantly, "Why don't you just call a cop." There was another silence, and the connection was broken.

I sat at my desk for a long time. Stanley was banging around in the darkroom. Once I tried to edit some wire copy, but the teletype printer was garbling, and I couldn't keep my mind on what I was doing. I sat there a long time, wondering about the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell and other voices of an imagined and also realized past, times gone dwindling cold, wondering about my vanished father and whatever happened to Bill Stern the Colgate Shave Cream Man and why Stanley had asked me to eat supper with him that night at the America Cafe. Until that afternoon Stanley had ignored me, speaking only when my ignorance made it unavoidable, sneering sarcastically when my headlines didn't fit or I missed errors in proofs. Now it was piling up, Stanley and the man on the phone and the riddled barriers between us, and I searched for some shade of design, working over it slowly, going blindly back to look for signs:

Earlier that day, just after presstime, I had been over in the ad department talking to Old Curry. Or mostly just listening to him talk: his voice was solid and heavy, edged with a floating wheeze from years of bars and cheap apartments and small-town dailies, and Old Curry talked quietly about people he'd known and places he'd been, about how to proof an ad mat and letter 24-pt. Bank Gothic Condensed on a layout and sell sig pages, about copy pencils, gimmicks, typos, disappointments, and next year, about the great job he'd been promised by an old buddy in San Francisco or Omaha or New York. It was constant and soothing, and I never had to say anything but could just sit and grin and listen.

Old Curry was telling me about a church-page contract he'd sold to some Baptist bootleggers in Lubbock, Texas, when Stanley clomped through from the backshop with an armful of fresh papers, his boot heels making precise little clicks on the tile floor. As he passed, he threw a couple of papers across Old Curry's desk, not looking at me or Old Curry.

"Read that hot story on p-eye," he said, tightening his thin mouth.

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Old Curry said "p-eye!" under a lusty wheeze and winked at me.

Stanley strutted on toward the semi-partitioned area we called the newsroom, dropping papers on empty desks. At the door he turned and saw that neither of us had picked up a paper. "Go on, aready," he said harshly, pointing to them. "Thanks to me, we got hot news when it happens, even before the radio station. P-eye, right there."

"Front page, you mean?" Old Curry said through his whiskey-whisper, gently, as if talking to a child.

"Banner head," Stanley said. "Eight across, double-column lead. Right there: 'Two Arrested in Motel Robbery.'"

"Somebody steal a guest towel?" Old Curry wheezed, still ignoring the papers Stanley had put on his desk. "Stanley Dunn, Boy Reporter," he said, smiling down at his drawing board.

Riding around town with the city police at night after work was all Stanley's idea, but he pretended it was some kind of special assignment. Sometimes he even called it The Night Beat. "Goddam," he would say tersely. "Take it from me, The Night Beat's a stinking lousy chore. But somebody's gotta do it." From Mayor Kowalcek, who was through a quirk of local politics also the county sheriff, he had wangled an honorary deputy's badge and a permit to carry the .357 Magnum he kept during the day in his desk drawer. According to rumor, the mayor and Stanley grew up in the same neighborhood in South Philadelphia, and Stanley's father had driven a beer truck for the mayor's uncle back in Philly during the twenties.

Rigged up for his nightly outing, Stanley was an awesome sight, his withered frame bristling with badge, gun, binoculars, a camera or two, film packs, light meters. Old Curry told him he wore the badge like a therapy blanket and incessantly baited him about his Dick Tracy complex.

"Listen you fat old fart," Stanley yelled. "I go out and get the hot stuff so's people will read this rag; now you get off your paper ass and go sell some goddam ads or something to earn your keep. And kid," he said to me, "you should oughta get the hell where you belong, you run around with that old bum you'll wind up a rummy has-been like him." He stalked off into the newsroom.

"Where's your black shirt and hobnails today, Stanley?" Old Curry said, still grinning, his voice spreading through the office. I liked Old Curry, even though I was drawn to him by things I only half-understood, like his joke about the therapy blanket or his habit of calling the paper the *Gallup Déjà Vu*, chuckling under his breath that nobody knew whether we were coming or going. But it was Stanley who would really begin for me the naming of parts, who would become the catalyst of my defection after the brief hours of that afternoon with Old Curry, into the night when I talked to the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell and later went with Stanley and the policeman Flores, the same night a big fat Navajo squaw got drunk and wandered up on Coal Avenue and got beat up.

Old Curry worked on at his drawing board, laying out a grocery ad. He was still smiling and mumbling softly, but he began to hum a heavy air, and I knew he was through talking. I went back to the newsroom. Stanley was there alone at his desk, looking out the window and absently snapping the trigger of his .357 Magnum. He sat there while I finished an obit, covered my typewriter, and turned off the A.P. wire. When I started to leave, he spoke without preface, almost indifferently: "Where you eating supper, kid?" My budget called for a bologna sandwich in my room at the Tip Top Hotel, but I went with him over to the America Cafe and ate a 97¢ plate-lunch that brought me down to seventy-six cents with three days to go until payday.

We sat in a corner booth, awkwardly silent except for Stanley making faint little whispers, sucking air through his teeth. Finally he started muttering about Old Curry. "I think Old Curry is a Jew, you know?" he said. "The trouble with this world is Hitler didn't kill enough Jews. Jews is one a the real troubles with this world."

The last two words came out *tdiss worl*. It was the strident echo of some fantasy, like vaudeville or Chicago, something I'd read about but knew did not exist. My father, who was from Oklahoma and couldn't have dated the Civil War within fifty years or told who fought it, would have said of Stanley, "That old boy talks like a yankee." But you didn't expect Stanley to speak in the soft flat tones of the Southwest, despite his craggy features and the western clothes he wore. He was too pale and brittle to be authentic, and there was a line of fragility in his long, aging face and his dulling eyes, in his whole body, that separated him forever from the lusty breed he tried to emulate. Even his clothes missed the mark: Sears Roebuck cowboy suits with zooty coats and arrow-stitched pockets, a narrow-brimmed imitation Stetson and highheeled boots that he called "c'boy shoose," around his thin, angular neck the inevitable beadstring tie with a thunderbird clasp of cheap Mexican silver, an emblem I had come to associate with tourists, plainclothes cops, republican poets, promoters, owners of curio shops.

"You're gonna be a newspaperman, you better learn what the deal is, see," Stanley said after Greek John had taken our order. "Ad men ain't a newspaperman. Not no rummy like Old Curry, for chrissake. You know what I mean?"

I didn't, but I nodded. I wanted Stanley to like me, because he had a gun and knew a lot of people around town and always seemed to be doing important things. He was, as he said, a Newspaperman.

"I'm a ace, kid. A star, you know?" Again I nodded earnestly. "I run the show. Today the whole front page—me. Every, damn, story, on p-eye." He stabbed the words onto the table with his fork, looking at me, staring at my face but focusing behind me into nothing.

He sat back, shifting. "I'd be editor of this rag if March didn't have O'Neal by the balls, you know that? Sure, March is got something on him—I ain't found out what—but I do know O'Neal's gonna tie a can on his tail first chance. He much as told me that already, I'm his

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boy when the time comes. Hell, I do the work anyway, all the local stuff, pull wire, sports, write heads, shoot the pics, chase my ass around all hours digging up the hot stuff, there. What does March do? I'll tell you, nothing but sit on his paper ass and suck that damn pipe and drink coffee and hand me all the shit details. And you ain't worth a fart in a high wind, you know that? You're a good kid, maybe, but you got to learn. I'm telling you, you gotta listen to me. And especially stay away from that crazy old ad peddler, he'll shoot you fulla crap. What's he been telling you about me?"

Nothing, I said. He's okay, he just talks about all the papers he's worked for and stuff like that.

"Yeah," Stanley said knowingly. "He's an old rumdum, a beatup old alky. I seen a million of 'em in the old days in Philly. You take my word, kid: alcohol is one of the real troubles with this world."

I told him Old Curry's story about selling the church ads to bootleggers in Texas. I wanted to impress him, but I couldn't tell it as well as Old Curry had.

Stanley grinned crookedly. "I wouldn't put nothing past that old pisser," he said. "But you think that's something, you just stick around. I got a few things working that'll really make your eyes pop. I mean this is stuff that'll blow this burg wide open. You stick with Stanley, kid, and maybe I'll let you in on it."

I wondered if that meant he might take me with him to watch the Navajos get thrown out of bars along 66 or wherever he was going that night, but I didn't ask. I tried not to be too eager when he said, "I got to get some stuff out of the darkroom there, before I go on The Night Beat. You wanna walk over to the paper with me?" Sure, I said, I've got some things I need to do. As it turned out, all I did was talk to the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell.

Stanley and I walked back to the *Daily View* in the crowded streets of early night, almost unaware, in the fluorescent blaze of the town, that darkness had come.

Sitting then at my desk after the man had called, listening to Stanley in the darkroom cursing Old Curry and trying to find a short in the strobe light, I worked it all across my mind, shuffling the times and places of my brief, scattered past: the gabled house where Mama died that last Iowa summer, a boxcar quaking somewhere across the land and sad old queers in Tulsa and Hank Williams wailing *Lovesick Blues* from drive-in jukeboxes; sunup beside chilled highways in the winter West, and the burnt rocks I'd seen, coming into town on the bus, dead crumbs of boulder and black lava flows in the mute country out north, coming down from Durango; and always the scorched air of casting boxes, pressroom smells, linotype mats clittering into the channels. Now Stanley. Thin, dingy Stanley. Stanley suddenly open and anxious. The old radio I had forgotten, and a voice unstilled by all the years, the many passing fevers.

For relief from the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell, I went to the *Daily View's* back-issue file and took a bound volume from the years of my beginning, the dull, grained thirties that seem now to have happened only in books and movies. I turned the brittle pages carefully, mindlessly searching the pictures and ad-cuts of fashions and cars that mark the distance back to that time, seeking nothing I'll ever find, finally losing myself in the yellowed ghosts of type: Roosevelt's third term, society news, comic strips, Joe Louis, prominent citizens, the new Hudson coupe deluxe ($465 f.o.b. Detroit). Occasionally I found something more exciting, a car wreck or a picture of Indians herding sheep or some movie queen passing through on the Super Chief. The best one was of a bank robber shot down in the street; I was poring over it when Stanley came out of the darkroom. I showed it to him.

"Nah," he said, glancing at it. "I seen hotter stuff than that inna *Goat Herders Digest*. In Philly they print stuff like that on a soc page."

I kept looking at the picture. "Chrissake," Stanley sneered. "That stuff's a dime a dozen. I got piles a stuff would make that look like a P.T.A." He seemed almost surprised when I closed the binder and looked at him, and he hurried on to keep the pace: "Listen, kid, I'm gonna let you in on something. Cause I like you, see? You're a dumb kid, but I like you."

I followed him over to his desk. "What I got is this here private confidential file," he said, taking a cheap tin box from one of the drawers, "and ain't many people knows about it, see, so keep your lip shut. Four years I been working on this file, you know? Since I left Philly: Missouri, Oklahoma City, Amarillo, everyplace I been." He stared up at me. "But you know," he said, "I take all this good stuff, and the simple butts won't run it." His face grew tight and he looked away through the grimy windows beyond his desk, peering out toward Route 66 a block away. Only a short stretch of it was visible between the buildings, narrowed in the darkness and throbbing with its one-way westbound traffic, lights of cars and trucks and buses flashing momentarily and then gone, like the mechanized white ducks on a shooting gallery range.

"Jeese, I'm gonna fix these bastards some day," he said. "That damn O'Neal and his goddam newspaper. And his goddam seventy-five-dollar-a-week jobs. I'm going to blow this town apart: O'Neal and all these blood-sucking Indian-raping Catholics and Old Curry and even the goddam mayor. Yeah, even old Kowalcek." He handed me a sheaf of pictures from the box. "With this here confidential file, I'm going to really shake things up, you know?"

There was at least one corpse in every picture: axe murders and shootings, car wrecks, suicides, an 8x10 glossy of a truck driver who'd gone to sleep in his cab with the motor running and the windows closed. The picture had been taken six days later, Stanley said, and it showed the driver on the truck seat, a rounded black and fuzzy mass that seemed fused and grown into the darkened interior of the cab.

"These is the ones I've took in Gallup," he said, separating a big stack. "All this many, in only six months. *Confidential* is going to pay me a lot for these pics one

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day. *National Inquirer*, maybe. Some mag like them. Maybe even *Life*, you know? 'Gallup, Sin City of the West.' How's that for a headline? Or maybe 'Sex and Sin on Sixty-Six, by Stanley Dunn.' That'll fix these bastards, the greedy sonsabitches. Greed is the whole trouble with this world." *Tdiss worl.*

The pictures Stanley had taken in Gallup included a few car wrecks and a murder or two, but they were mostly of drunk Indians, not dead but only passed out and beat up in alleys or under the bridges along the Rio Puerco. I wowed and shuddered over them anyway, and Stanley, grinning vacantly now, began to talk, darting from subject to subject, reaching at times a wild frightening babble before ebbing away into a gentle directness that lulled me, transfixed.

The episodes of his story were mixed and disjointed, commingled with irrelevant commentary and dates lost or unmentioned in the rush of words: he'd been an alcoholic, a couple of fifths a day and going up, until one day he just quit and never took a drink again or wanted one; there was a story about owning a portrait studio back in Philly, and one about the AA, which Stanley said was worse than church, "one a the big troubles of this world." He talked about several women, one of whom emerged as his wife, a frail, nervous woman who didn't like to screw. "No, that's not right," he rattled, "she liked to screw, but not me, just everybody else," and she kept running away with various men, finally with an Air Force captain and Stanley traced them to Denver where he caught them shacked up in a motel and threatened to kill them both with his .357 Magnum which his friend Mayor and Sheriff Kowalcek had given him a permit for, he could carry it legally but probably not in Colorado but that didn't matter, it was all before that anyway and he'd scared the piss out of both of them and locked the Air Force captain in the john while he beat hell out of his wife and then took the Air Force captain out at gunpoint without his clothes on and took him out to Lowry Field and made him walk naked down the main street of the base, up to the big general's office and he'd turned him in and now the bastard was salted away at Leavenworth for disgracing the uniform and conduct unbecoming an officer, that was one bastard he had taught not to mess around.

Somewhere in the midst of his harangue, Stanley began to pace, not at all like a caged animal, but moving deliberately, without drama or gesture, touching objects on the desks, opening drawers, scrambling through the morgue files. He hobbled on the high heels of his cowboy boots, like a hard old country girl in her Sunday pumps, often silent now for long intervals as he jerked about the room. He took a big gunbelt from his desk and put it on, carefully adjusting the holster on his bony thigh before he buckled the belt. Then he sat back in his chair, his legs propped on a wastebasket and crossed at the ankles. He scissored his feet together and looked at the ceiling for a long time. Finally he got up and started collecting his equipment, not looking at me or saying anything, not as if he were ignoring me but simply as if I weren't there.

I was watching him, thinking *Now he won't let me go with him*, wondering why, knowing but not aware of it, when the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell called again.

He was fighting for control now, his speech still level and deliberate, but the tension was creeping in, warping the edge of his voice like ravels in a strip of worn elastic.

"Listen, I need help," the man said. "Someone must help me." There was fear and despair in him, and it spread through me as if transfused by the telephone that connected us. I wanted to help him, but there were the nagging echoes of so much that I had put behind me, of stained walls and old drunks and minds tormented beyond all pain, the spit and vomit and frenzy of too many times and places with no reason or order. From our old Stromberg-Carlson I had acquired a sense of reality that was too often violated by nothing more than chance and my own ignorance. You couldn't count on Jack Armstrong these days, and so I put the man off. Finally he began to beg, and I had to stop him. I told him I would meet him in front of the Palace Theater on Coal Avenue, and it would have been a fine and absolute lie if he had not begun to cry before I could hang up. He thanked me over and over, muttering other things I could not understand, gently and almost crooning, the way Old Curry talked about San Francisco, the way my father used to sing "Away Out on the Mountain," and I put the receiver slowly back in its cradle.

Stanley had strolled away into the darkroom again. Now he was back, ready to leave, loaded up like a withered mummy on some spectral safari, embalmed in a shroud of straps and cords, almost covered by the leather cases that held camera, film, strobe light, gun, binoculars. He started for the door, and I was struck with the final terror of being alone with Harry Von Zell.

I called to him and he stopped at the door, his back to me. "How about some coffee?" I said. "I'll buy—"

"Nah. Gotta meet Flores. Gotta thing working."

"Wait," I said. "Look, it's this guy who called about the AA. He's in pretty bad shape."

"Who ain't? Lissen kid, I got more things to do than nurse a drunk. Do-gooders is one a the real troubles a this world."

"Stanley, listen to me. I told the guy I'd meet him."

His nose twitched. "You really got brains, you know? The guy could be crazy or maybe even a tough queer . . ."

"He won't try anything with two of us," I said. "He sounds real helpless."

Stanley smiled faintly. "That kind a hard case oughta have his head kicked in. That's the way we took care of 'em back in Philly."

"I don't know what to do for him," I said nervously. I was getting louder. "Maybe Curry will help me."

"I awready told you, quit screwing around with that old fart," Stanley said sharply. He thought a minute. "Where you supposed to meet this bottle baby?"

I told him. "Maybe there's a story in it, if he shows up," I said.

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"Nah," Stanley said. "There ain't no story. The guy's a bum. A stinking rummy." But he put down his cameras and binoculars. "Okay," he said. "Little fun for a change. Let's go get this poor helpless stinking rummy."

I had no choice now but to follow him and hope it would work out. We walked over to Coal and waited at the corner just beyond the theater, watching people mill on the street. I tried not to think about what Stanley might do. "If the guy comes," I said cautiously, "I still think we may get a story—"

"There ain't no story," Stanley said. "We didn't come for no story. We come for this." He fingered the badge. He was wearing it on the lapel of his coat. But he took it off and stuck it out of sight on his shirt. "We come to get a souvenir for Flores," he said, "that spic."

After about ten minutes, Stanley said, "There comes your boy." I saw him through the crowd, coming down the block. *No, that's not him*, I thought, but I knew it was. He was wearing a filthy tee-shirt and jeans and tennis shoes and had a beard about four days old and was dirtier than you'd think anybody could get. *But why's he walking*, I kept thinking, *where's his Chrysler?* Stanley said, "Good. He's moochin', aready. I'll break his fucking arm."

The man was coming down the street in a loping, easy walk, weaving carefully through the clusters of people. Now and then he would stop in front of someone and begin to talk, gesturing erratically with his hands. A few people fumbled for small change, but most of them sidestepped him without losing stride and walked on as if they had not seen him.

He stopped under the theater marquee, flashing an anxious smile at everyone who went by, and I waited for Stanley to move or force me to, but instead he slumped down over a parking meter, not looking at the man. "He don't know you—you ain't give him no i.d., right?" he said. I nodded. "So just stay put. It's a lot . . . too much action around here, see," he said awkwardly. For a long time the man stood there before us, his sunken eyes probing for a redeemer, for some faceless messiah bearing mercy and comfort and an easy touch. But none had come, and at last he turned wearily, as if now in a trance. He crossed the street, looking back from time to time toward the theater as he drifted away.

Stanley kept glancing around nervously. Finally he shuffled over to the curb and motioned to me and we started off aimlessly behind the man. Once we lost him in the crowd and almost passed him in front of a bar. He was looking at the money he'd collected, but evidently it wasn't enough, and he wandered on. As he passed into the dark, vacant blocks down near the post office, I looked anxiously at Stanley, and he spat and said, "What the hell. Let's take him." I hesitated, and he snapped: "We just move in from behind, one on each side. I'll handle it." He said *hannle* for *handle*.

We pushed the man against a darkened building. Stanley, showing his badge, said, "Okay friend. Don't give us no trouble."

The man cringed against the wall, and for an instant he couldn't speak. Then he straightened up, and in that deep, clear voice, but faintly breaking, he said, "What's the matter, officer?"

"None a that," Stanley snarled. "What's the idea bothering honest citizens? We don't allow no filthy crumbs like you—"

"Now see here," the man said unsteadily, but bringing himself up very straight. "You can't talk to me that way."

It threw Stanley off for a minute. Then he said, "You resisting a officer of the law? I aready got you on enough counts. Vag, panhandling, drunk-and-disorderly . . ."

"Wait, now. I'm not drunk. Just a drink or two . . . that's why I came down here . . . some fellow from the newspaper is supposed to—. But maybe he couldn't come." He looked at me. His eyes were wet and shiny. "Say," he said, "I need help bad. Badly. I've had a little trouble."

"You ain't had nothing to what you're gonna get," Stanley said. But he just stood there.

The man looked at him, trying to focus. "Understand," he said. "Doing okay, see. Flagstaff, worked a while. Eats and bed. She said it would be that way, always trouble, little drink now and then, rough you see, that's what she said . . ." The words diminished into the confusion of his mind, and he lifted his hand to his face and tried again. "Got here, dropped off a train, see . . . bought a bottle, full new fifth, all messed up trouble . . . they took it, stole it right off me dirty bums . . . yes, that's . . . she said, going . . ."

He put his head back against the wall and looked at Stanley. The dim flash of an orange neon sign up the street flickered and pulsed across his face, keeping time, and the three of us stood there silently on the summer-night street, waiting, listening for a voice, an echo, the skip of static, some sound or impulse from beyond our own broken devices. It was quiet all around us and not far away the ragged cadence of the town in calm and evening movement, and the beat of neon light across his face, flashing, flashing.

Finally Stanley said, "Ah, shit," and took the man's arm, but the man did not move, except to place his free hand gently over Stanley's. "Officer, you ever have trouble?" he said brokenly, and his voice choked off. I could see wet strands crisscrossing in his open mouth. "You ever have trouble . . . ?"

Stanley stepped back. He started to say something, but instead he wrinkled his nose and looked away. Then, still staring into the blackness toward 66, he snarled, "Shut up, you miserable bastard." He looked at the man, and the tight grey skin along his temples throbbed. "Get the hell outta here."

The man circled slowly away from Stanley with his head tilted like a puzzled dog. "Understand," he said, "she just wouldn't—"

Stanley cut him off, shouting in his face, but the man smiled. "Just like you say, officer. Don't get mad."

"Then get the hell oughta my sight!" Stanley yelled,

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but he seemed aware for the first time of his loudness and he stopped. "Okay," he said. "So you had a bad time. Everybody's had a bad time. You ain't careful, you're gonna have *real* trouble, half-drunk and bummin' around on the street. You sure ain't in no condition for a drunktank full of puking Indians." The man nodded intently.

"You need a meal, and some sacktime—"

The man said, "If . . . if I could just have a little drink—"

"Yeah, that too, I guess." With thumb and forefinger, Stanley fished in his hip pocket and brought out a warped black billfold. He took two dollars out of it and looked at me. "How much you got, kid?" he said. I stood dumbly for a few seconds, then dug into a pocket, knowing that all I had was some change. A fifty-cent piece, two dimes, six pennies.

"No, that wouldn't be right," the man said. "I can't take your money, not without doing something . . ."

Stanley wadded his two bills around my change and stuffed it all into the man's pocket.

"Something in return," the man muttered absently. "I usually tell them my story . . ."

"No stories," Stanley said. "That ain't much, but it'll get you a full gut and a jug of sneaky-pete. Now you give me your word you'll get out of town. I catch you again, I'm gonna break some bones."

"Yes, I understand," the man said, sounding like Harry Von Zell, walking backwards away from us. And then he turned and began to run, twitching and erratic, into the darkness.

On our way back to the office, I said, "Stanley, why'd you do that? Why'd you give him the money? That's all I had till payday."

Stanley looked at me sharply and then glanced away into a store window we were passing. "You talk like a guy with a paper ass, you know? Punks like you is one of the big troubles with this world," he said. "So starve like everybody else, you need it."

But I guess he felt a little guilty. When we got back to the *Daily View*, he said, "You want to go with me and Flores, see how cops really operate?"

Flores was out of uniform and supposedly off duty, but he was driving one of the city's patrol cars. I got in the back seat beside Stanley's cameras. While Flores drove around aimlessly, Stanley told him, with major variations, about our encounter with the man. Flores laughed. "Man, he better not let Poby or Hernandez find him," he said. "They'll kill that mother."

We were driving along Coal Avenue about midnight when we saw the paddy wagon and stopped. A squaw who weighed at least three hundred pounds had gotten drunk in one of the bars on 66 and wandered up to Coal. Three cops were trying to put her in the wagon. She thought they wanted to play, and like some coquettish child-giant, she kept swatting them and pushing them away, giggling drunkenly as she waddled back and forth.

Just as Flores and Stanley got out of the car, she reeled against a trash can and fell like a rubber water bag, still giggling as she rolled in the gutter. She sat up listlessly and arranged her velveteen blouse, pulling down her long dirty skirt, tucking it around her ankles and flattening its heavy folds. Two cops took her arms and tried to pick her up, but she giggled and went slack, and they tugged in frustration, heaving and cursing. Now and then one would step back and kick her, his foot burying soundlessly in her fat waist and thighs. The other cop began to slap her across the face with the back of his hand, his jaws grinding, and then he punched her full in the face and her head went back, thudding down on the pavement, and she stopped giggling.

Stanley walked over and stood over her with his hands on his hips, looking down as if viewing a hole in the ground. He laughed at the two cops, who had stepped back, breathing heavily and dripping sweat.

"Hey, youse guys sure don't know much, you know?" he said. "I learnt how to handle babies like this before I was big enough to blow my nose. Want I should show you how it's done?" The cops, still sucking air, scowled at him silently.

He stepped across the prostrate squaw and straddled her neck and then sat down hard on her stomach. When her head jerked up involuntarily, heaving out her breath, he swung both hands in front of him, arms straight and palms open, popping her across both ears at the same time, as if he were clapping two cymbals over a basketball. He did it again and again until she began to shriek with pain, blood bubbling from her nose and ears.

Stanley stood up, wiping his hands with a handkerchief, watching the squaw thresh and moan against the curb. "Now, you see," he said, going back to the car for his camera. "That's how we handle troublemakers in Philly." *Hannle.*

Later in the night it rained, and the streets were cool and shiny. It had rained a lot that summer. Much more than usual, they said. I always liked rain, and I took it as a sign that things would be getting better for me, that perhaps I would go someplace where it always rained a lot. It seems strange that I thought that, because the rains in Gallup were not especially pleasant ones, and I had learned by then that rain is really only dry peas dropped on a drumhead. The Lone Ranger rode a sink plunger and Bill Stern became a junky, and The Shadow does not really know what evil lurks in the hearts of men. The rains that summer were hard, quick showers that soon drained away in sour streams down to the Rio Puerco, the River of the Pig, but they left the mornings deep and clear, until the day passed into the drone of tourist traffic and Indians went from the bars by the river to vomit and pass out under bridges and along side streets. On my way to work that morning after I talked to the man who sounded like Harry Von Zell, I saw three Indians drunk already in the streets. Actually there were four, because one of the three was a squaw with a baby, lying in an alley against a low adobe wall, and the baby was nursing one of her sagging breasts, between which the mother, head lolling out of control, had vomited. But the streets were cool and glistening, shiny dark in the morning light.

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A STORY BY DAVID KRANES

PYROMANIA

They were all body sounds: flushed pipes aching through the hidden carpentry of his dream; a young child in a cave somewhere bargaining with insects; dogs, staring at him, baying, growing larger with each bay; his wife, him over her, her face turned hard to one side, the whole lower eye-casing and jaw granulating into sand. And then the pipes joined the child and the child joined the dogs and the dogs joined his wife — all growing louder, all nearly climaxing with fire engines: What were fire engines doing in his dream?

Reid Callister unlocked his eyes. It was early. The leaving dark or entering light had set up mild half-radiant heat flickers on his wall. Reid listened. The Martins' setters, almost a block away, howled. His daughter, Bethy, across the hall, cried. The plumbing, somewhere between their bedroom and basement, shuddered more than just-vaguely, complained. And the fire engines were real, were still there. He felt his collarbone tighten with their approach and turned to Leah beside him, her eyes closed, her mouth open and wet, who had begun to moan. He shook her.

"What's the matter?"

She rolled over, mouth swallowing the pillow: The engines, pipes, Martins' dogs, Bethy across the hall: all keened more loudly. Things drew. He could hear the wheels and motors of the firetrucks, and he took a breath.

"Leah — what?" He turned to her.

". . . Huh?"

"What? You were. . ."

"I was having the dream."

"What dream?"

"Oh — the lovemaking dream. I'm all right. Someone. . . You. . ." She rolled back. Reid heard the trucks stopping just outside. He heard doors slamming, equipment. He heard, close by, heavy wood splintering and ran downstairs to it. There were three trucks of firemen standing in his broken door.

"Jesus Christ!" he said and ran back up to Bethy's room. She was sitting up in her bed, looking either very puzzled or scared. She was rubbing her leg. "You all right, Sweetheart?" he asked her, holding his breath.

"Morning, Daddy," she said.

"You have a dream?"

"I don't know."

Reid rushed back down to where the firemen were moving in and out of his rooms, mounting and dismounting the threshold to his basement stairs. In the centers of both his living and dining rooms, under smoke-colored tarpaulins, was his furniture. "What are you doing?" he asked them; "why are you here?"

"Someone called," one of the firemen said. They all smelled like innertubes.

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"Well, I checked upstairs. I checked my daughter's room."

"Find anything?"

"She was rubbing her leg."

"We've done the kitchen, basement, general downstairs, garage. Everything seems to be all right. Want us to double check you upstairs?"

"No, there's just the two. Rooms. And the sink." Reid smelled for smoke but couldn't find any.

"Sorry. — But someone called." The fireman nodded to him. "Glad for your sake it wasn't real."

"Yeah." He wondered if they were all disappointed. *Who* had called? "Yeah; me too. Sorry. Thanks, though."

"Have a good day."

"Yeah. You too. Thanks."

He heard the engines start up and, more casually now, leave. Had there been a mistake? Was somebody else's house, perhaps on the other side of Simsbury, now in ashes?

He cut himself twice shaving. Leah told him once again, coyly, "I had the dream," not remembering that she had told him once before. Bethy showed him a watercolor of autumn leaves she'd brought home from school. She recited a poem: "Fall is filling up with days/ And leaves and colors all ablaze." "Very good," he told her and hugged her and kissed her shiny rope of hair and sent her off to school. He drank another quick coffee and burnt his tongue so that it felt like a small scrub-brush in his mouth. He watched Leah in her sherbet bathrobe in their Connecticut back yard, setting cakes of suet and peanut butter out for cardinals and chickadees. On his way driving the highway into Hartford to symphony rehearsal, he saw, in the rearview mirror, the car in back of him suddenly burst into flames and swerve off the road into a field.

He pulled over hard and watched it burn. His door seemed locked, but it opened and he ran across the field toward the heat. The flaming car looked like Bethy's picture of autumn leaves: "Fall is filling. . ." It had begun to spread itself into the dry uneven grass. Reid felt the heat. He smelled burning hair, felt the pores along his arms hook slightly, curl. He moved into the flames. There was a door handle. He pulled it. There was a body inside. All he could take in of it were huge, enormous eyes and an open mouth. He pulled the body from the car and, somehow, ran with it out into the field, dropping at one point, rolling both himself and it over against the smell of parched grass and cigarette clay — should either or both of them be on fire. He felt then heard the car away from them explode. Police came, ambulances. They were both taken to the hospital.

Reid's problem was more smoke inhalation than anything else. They kept him there for two hours, then let him go. "The girl's in much worse shape," the doctor told him. "Her face and arms seem to be all right. But her chest is pretty bad. We may have to do some grafting. Listen: she wanted to thank you before you left."

"Yeah," Reid said. "Sure." The singed hair at the back of his head started to make his neck feel tight.

The doctor took him to her room and walked him in. She had red hair, seemed quite young. Her skin was unnaturally white. "Here's the man who saved your life," the doctor told her and then left.

She tried to smile.

"Hello," Reid said to her. "Glad to see that you're pretty much all right."

"Thank you," she said.

"No problem." Reid drew in a full breath, tasting, with it, something moist, something vaporous, like alcohol. He could smell bandages. "Glad to see. . ."

She was moving her lips: wetting, chewing them. He thought there must be something that she was trying to say and set himself closer. He watched her. Her eyes were amazingly clear. He thought he saw flames snapping in them for a brief instant but decided that it was just a reflection of the overhead fan.

"Well, I have to be going," he told her. He wondered if his breath smelled of smoke. *He* smelled smoke. Was there smoke visible when he spoke? "I'm over two hours late for rehearsal," he told her. "I play with the Hartford Symphony. Bass."

For the first time she smiled. But the effort of smiling seemed to make her lips go white. Then blue. "Thank you," she said again; this time with much more effort, lip movement, not even a whisper. Reid smiled back, turned, and very quietly opened and closed the door. Outside in the corridor, he looked hurriedly for a Men's Room. He felt like he had some sort of ointment on his hands.

He told all about the burning car and girl at rehearsal. A lot of orchestra members questioned him. He told Leah about it that night, while Bethy was watching Mr. Rodgers in the other room.

"That's incredible." Leah said to him.

"You're Special," Mr. Rodgers was singing to his friends.

"I know," Reid said. Then he told her about his early-morning dream.

"Oh — I called; and the insurance covers our front door," she said. She hugged him. "You smell like gasoline."

"I do?"

Leah explained her theory about dreams and reality: Time is Atomic, she conjectured. It is made of tiny, tiny Atoms. Events then, are an Atomic Configuration of Time. Often, especially when the Event is a Strong One, The Atoms Configure before It actually Occurs. Thus — Dreams, Intuitions, Premonitions. "What do you think?" she asked.

"Anything's possible."

That night Reid dreamed he was throwing old newspapers into an incinerator. He woke up and heard fire engines again, this time moving away. Back in a sort

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of half-sleep he saw the redheaded girl's blue lips. They became a probing spring bulb blooming in sped up action as in a Walt Disney True-Nature Wildlife film. Two lips. Tulip. The pun and irony in his dream were terrible, but he stood laughing hysterically at them as the eye of the dream withdrew to an aerial shot: Reid in a vast field of crocuses, arms spread in an embrace of sky. He woke heavily with the alarm.

No cars ignited that morning on his way to work. There was a strange phone call for him that noon at the hall. "Reid Callister: one of the phones in the lobby," someone announced — but when he picked it up there was no voice. Had he taken too long? The mouthpiece smelled like shorted wires and he hung it up.

The next day he called the hospital and inquired about the girl. "How is she?" he asked. "Better," someone told him. He thought about her white skin and probable chest grafts. That afternoon Blacks, reportedly, bombed Lord and Taylor's in West Hartford. At a bar, where he saw the televised news of the bombing after rehearsal, Reid ordered a second Sangrille and thought how he'd once had a matchbook collection.

That night he tried to make love to Leah. She got out of bed, went to the bathroom, sat, got up, brushed her teeth, tweezed a hair from her cheek, came back to bed and slept like a woman twice her weight, on her stomach. In the morning, washing her face in the bathroom, she called, almost sang, to him. "I had the dream again."

"Leah, that was *real*." He could feel the flat back of his head against the headboard.

She peered out from behind the washcloth, mostly at herself in the long mirror. "What do you mean?"

No one on Friday seemed to have any news about the redhaired girl at the hospital. He tried to remember specific doctors' names, but couldn't. "She was in a *car fire*. Her car *burned*. She came in last Tuesday. She was going to have chest grafts." No information; no connections. "She had red hair. She was about — I'd say — 27 years old. Her car exploded. It was between Simsbury and Hartford." "We have a lot of burn cases," a woman told him; "You'll have to give us more specific information than that." For two days, the stem of his pipe, whenever he smoked it, felt dangerously hot. And he worried, for some reason, that his bass, as he stroked Villa-Lobos on it, would combust.

The following Thursday, Reid woke up with a fever and Leah called the doctor. "It's up over a hundred and four," she reported. The doctor told her to go out immediately and buy lots of Gatorade. Have Reid drink just as much of it as he could possibly handle. Three aspirin every two hours. Call him back in the middle of the day. Bethy went off to school. Leah went out to get the Gatorade. Reid fell back to sleep and dreamed of large quadrilateral patches of skin, pinned neatly and drying on a line. When he woke up he thought he smelled his blankets smoldering. But it was just toast that Leah had made for him and set beside the bed with an enormous blue plastic glass of Gatorade and three aspirin. He took it all. The aspirin seemed to bleach his throat as it went down. By noon he was feeling much better.

"How're you feeling, hon?" Leah asked him.

"Much better," he said.

She handed him another full pint of Gatorade.

By suppertime, his temperature was normal.

"How're you feeling, Daddy?" Bethy asked him.

"Much better. . . . What color would you say Bethy's hair is?" he asked.

"Tawny," Leah said to him, then repeated, "Tawny. . . . Have some more juice."

The following Monday at rehearsal, Reid looked out into the dark hall and saw the redhaired girl sitting in the middle of the auditorium. When he broke for lunch, she was no longer there. He had lunch with the oboe player, Wally Scroggs, who talked almost desperately about herb gardens and meteorites. "Rosemary!" he said at one point; "Jesus Christ!" And then at another, "Pyroxine!" They were both finishing their scampi.

In the afternoon, though, she was there again. And he thought he saw her during the Schubert at the concert that night. She was there on Tuesday and again on Wednesday, always getting away before he could approach. He thought he saw her face pressed against the window of a passing bus Wednesday afternoon. And when she was back again at mid–morning Thursday, he kept trying to catch her attention with off-center jerks of his head. Whenever he thought she was looking right at him, he formed his lips wide into the word: "Wait." The conductor asked him if his collar was too tight.

But she *had* seen him, and did wait. She was in the lobby when he got there at noon. "How are you?" he asked.

"Much better," she said.

"Good."

"It was pretty rough for a while."

"Yes. I can imagine. I called. . ."

"You play beautifully," she said to him.

"Oh. — Thank you."

"Thank you for saving my life."

He asked her to lunch.

They had Dubonnet and eggplant parmisagne. Her name was Lorin Beecher and she came from Pittsburgh. She was 27 years old. Her father, Raymond Beecher, had been a research chemist who'd had the left side of his face burned off in a laboratory explosion when he was thirty-eight. The following year he had won an international prize for his investigation. The family had travelled to Hong Kong where Lorin, then only sixteen, had fallen in love with a Japanese printmaker named Ten Han. He had taught her a great deal about graphics. Then he'd introduced her to pots. She had had Ten Han's child, whom Ten Han said he would like to keep, and she had returned to the States with her family just before she'd turned twenty. She'd tried the University of Denver for a half year, during which time she'd continued her interest in pots, but also begun glass blowing. She'd taken

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up with a country and western song writer who'd had an obsession with blackjack. But she'd felt it a vacant sort of bond and left for the East. She had lived alone, reading and glassblowing, in Hillsboro, New Hampshire, for two years; acted in a hardcore pornographic movie shot in Lowell, Mass. (The Boston *Herald* had advertised: "Industrial Film."); worked at a suicide clinic in Cambridge; and then, eight months ago, come to Hartford and opened a pottery and glass boutique in suburban Canton. She was calling the shop *Ten Han's.*

"You've had an interesting life," Reid said to her.

The waitress brought their coffee.

"Yes. Yes; I have."

"Look. Listen, I have to get back to rehearsal. But maybe I can see you again."

"Oh. Yes. Yes; I think you can. Thank you. Oh, I think I'll sit here for a while longer. I like it. It's nice. — Besides — Mick is handling the shop."

"Mick?"

"Yes."

Reid left her fifteen dollars to pay the bill and left.

That night Reid dreamed that he and the girl, Lorin Beecher, were huddled by a clump of birches at the edge of a field. Planes were flying overhead. The air was almost netted with bombs, and the field almost continually florid with bomb explosions as the two of them pressed against each other, each holding breath. When it was over they were in deckchairs on a large sundeck overlooking a very blue sea. They were drinking something with crushed fruit and rum and Lorin was very close, her eyes wide, her lips wet. Reid woke up. It felt as if someone's elbow had been on his chest. He slipped out from the covers and went downstairs. Leah had left a package of frozen sweetrolls on the breakfast table to thaw and he thought about opening them but decided not. He switched a front burner on on the stove and watched the coil heat: ashen, purplegrey, then finally red. He switched it off. He remembered a fourth-grade social studies report he had given on Nero and heard a strange string music in his head. "Nero was not a person like you or me," it had begun. His teacher, Miss Allred, had given him an "A." He had seen her in the back of the room crying when he was giving it. Yes — and she'd pulled him aside after class; "I'm sorry," she had said, "But there was a time when I went to a very special concert with somebody — also very special. And it was Peter Nero."

At breakfast, Bethy told him, "At school today, we're going to make candles."

"Great," he said.

"I had the dream again last night," Leah winked at him.

"Maybe after Bethy. . ."

Leah set one hand secretively at her mouth. "We were ice-boating on the Connecticut River. We had gone for miles. We were on an island: stopped. We were drinking hot broth. We had great huge fat parkas on."

"What are you talking about?" Bethy asked.

"Nothing, Sweetheart." Leah kicked Reid under the table. Reid bit into the center of his sweetroll and could taste ice crystals.

Lorin Beecher was at the rehearsal again that morning and again he signalled her. For the second day, they had lunch.

"Don't you have to watch your shop?" he asked her.

"Mick's there," she said.

"Oh. Who's Mick?"

"Mick's Mick," she said, smiling; "Just Mick."

"Would you like another drink?" he asked her; "don't you want something more than just chef's salad?"

"You know, don't you," she looked straight at him, "You know, of course, that I'm pursuing you." He nodded. She smiled. "You're a lovely man."

The image was crude; he understood that, but it felt as though there were an electric sander chafing at his lungs.

They had lunch together through Friday. He talked tangents: the red cinnamon-smelling candle that Bethy had made, the snapped choke cable on his car, the President's step-up of the bombing, his reaction to *Straw Dogs.* Her comments, as uncomplicated as they seemed, were almost always intimate: "I was a regular little Electra; I wanted my father in the worst way. . ."/"He felt like nothing. Absolutely nothing. It was like eating a T.V. dinner with the electric hairdryer on. . ."/"I didn't use to think so, but now I'm just about convinced — the glassblowing *is, really* is, sexual."

On the way home that night, Reid stopped at a record store at a large shopping center and bought two albums with compositions by John Cage. He listened to the Cage and to Scriabin almost all weekend. On Saturday afternoon he took Bethy to a revival of Bambi in a small rancid East Hartford theatre. Together they watched the forest burn, the cartoon animals fright, scream, scamper. Together they cried. Bethy took his hand — or he, Bethy's. "Do you love animals, Daddy?" Bethy leaned over and asked him. "Yes," he whispered back, his voice startlingly choked. Afterwards, they each had a raspberry Icee and went home. That night at a backyard cookout party, drinking gin and tonics and waiting for the tastelessly thick steaks to stop dripping blood into the briquets, a friend's wife said to him: "I think I should tell you — you are very much in my fantasies." "What sort of fantasies?" he'd asked her. "Don't play games," she'd said. Then next morning, Leah cooked Spanish omelettes and there were all sorts of fire engines on the cartoons. And in the back yard, just before noon, was a sudden migratory flock of bohemian waxwings.

The following day, when they met in the lobby for lunch, Lorin asked him, "How much time do you have?"

"Only an hour now," he said, "but we break for the day today at three."

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"Why don't I go back," she said, "to Canton. To my shop. To Ten Han's. I'll make us something. Something I learned in China. Could you stop there on your way home. I can give you the address."

"Yes," Reid said. "Sure."

"Fine," she said. "Then, here." And she clamped a small map, holding it longer than necessary, in his hand. "After three, then."

"After three."

After three, Reid unlocked his Tempest and followed Lorin's map to Canton. He found the house, "Ten Han's" burned in slightly calligraphed letters outside on a piece of shellacked pine: a converted two-story structure painted antique green, shuttered in black with a black door. There were red silk curtains in the windows. Reid parked and went inside.

Everywhere, though it was small, he saw planes of wood: beams, tables, floorboards, wide shelves of walnut and oak. On the floorboards were small hand-done rugs; and on the tables and shelves were shapes — glazed, reflective shapes — all ceramic and glass. Webbed overhead, a sort of underceiling, was a large-gapped macramé. And there were clove apples hanging from strings and candles, lit candles, everywhere, all in soft handblown globes of glass. Reid stood and saw it, sensed it. He felt the inside of his head seem to go loose and granular like a wet sugarcube. Then, quietly, a boy — deeply suntanned and no more, Reid would have guessed, than eighteen — approached him. The boy's hair was white, almost grey, the color of shore wood, washed and bleached then washed and bleached again.

"Can I help you sir?"

"Is Miss. . . Is Lorin here — Miss Beecher."

"You must be Reid."

"Yes."

"She's upstairs. I'll show how you get there."

"Thank you."

"Behind those beads there — it goes up. She's. . ."

"Thank you." Reid climbed the thin, steep, cornering stairs and smelled rice. When he reached the top, listening unnaturally to the sound of his shoes in the ascent, he could see Lorin at the far end of the long full-story gabled room, by a stove. She was wearing a long Chinese dress. There were bright tasseled pillows all over the floor, more glass hanging in nets from the beams. And there were two enormous pedestal candles, one at each end of the room. He stopped on the top stair until she turned around.

"I'm making something," she smiled; "it's almost done."

"Smells good,"

"They're called 'dai bow,'" she said, "They're pastries. You have them with tea. Actually it should be earlier in the day for them. But I think they'll be all right. Did you meet Mick?"

"Suntanned?"

"Yes. That's Mick. He's awfully nice."

"Does he. . . ?"

"I was giving a pottery class at a boys' prep school near here. Westminster. He was in the class. His family is in Brazil. Something about oil. He gets home every other Christmas. Once in a while he meets his father in New York. He does most of the pots now. Though I still fire them. But I mainly concentrate on the glass. We did acid together once and decided it would be good for him to stay here. Neither of us are really into that any more. Too many people messed up. But we're both grateful for that once. Sit down."

"Thank you."

"Do you like rice wine?"

"I've. . . Yes — thank you."

"It's not very good. You can't really get any decent rice wine in Hartford, Connecticut. I'm thinking of making some of my own. But it's not bad. It will do. There."

Reid thought the wine in the glazed, calligraphed cup looked like mineral oil. He tasted it. His throat became sear, dry. "Very good." His voice sounded like it came from the other end of the room.

"It's all right." She kissed him lightly on the cheek and Reid felt his blood combust from the inside edges of his dry throat to the upper edges of his jaw, then flame again across the bridge of his nose. "Let me check the dai bow;" she spoke very quietly, then moved off. Reid drew a breath. He heard wind chimes somewhere in the room and looked for them. He heard fire engines in the city, gathering.

Lorin brought the steaming pastries and sat down on the pillow with him. They were glossy and white and looked like puffs of greased, barely-cooked dough. "They look good," he said to her. "They are," she said. "They're marvelous." She put her hand on him. "What's in them?" he asked. "Everything!" She kissed him again, this time on the side of his chin. "Everything. Pork. Scallions. Duck eggs." "Oh," Reid said, and lifted one from the plate. "They're steamed," she told him. "They have paper on the bottom of them. You should take it off." She smiled. "Glad you told me." He smiled back at her. He removed the paper and bit in. "Good," he said. And it was: sweet, meaty, rich. "Have some more of the wine," she suggested. "Oh — I will," he said. And did. He felt the steamed dough still in his mouth absorb the wine, like a rum cake. "They're good together," he said. She nodded, very pleased with herself, the way he'd seen Bethy be sometimes. "Yes," she said, nodding the whole while, "Yes."

When they had finished the pastry and the wine, Lorin asked him if he would like a hot, spiced towel: "Better than a finger bowl," she told him.

"That sounds great."

She kissed him again, this time on the mouth, and he responded. He felt very young, very adolescent. He remembered another redhaired girl, Kay Johnson, he had gone ice skating with on the sidewalks after an ice storm in the eighth grade. Her mother had made them cocoa and then, with her father, gone up to bed, leaving them together in the living room at 8:30. He had sat there

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with one arm around Kay and one hand on the handle of his cocoa cup feeling the same way he felt now, kissing Lorin. He even thought he could smell the smell of himself in his blue and red skating sweater somewhere in the room; and somewhere — chocolate.

Lorin rocked back on her feet and moved off toward where she'd steamed the dai bow. She seemed lighter to Reid now, like a consideration inside himself. She took something from the steamer and started back, tossing, almost ritually, a rolled towel from hand to hand. Reid thought that he smelled, in sequence: cinnamon, wintergreen, clove, nutmeg, peppermint, lemon. Then she was there, unrolling the towel, tamping it on his face. And he breathed it in, drank it like hot grog. He could feel the individual pores of his skin opening, breathing, being cooled. He could feel his sinuses clear. He could feel his eyes drift on warm air within the open cage of his skull. He could feel Lorin's fingers, like a violinist's, undoing the buttons of his shirt. He wondered if he were not asleep. He could feel warm strokes and taste towel pressing at the corners of his eyes. He could feel Lorin's breasts against him, his skin. He listened for fire engines. He was sure he was asleep. He could feel silk slipping continually past. Everything had that weightlessness, the strange lubrication of a dream.

Until he smelled smoke.

Two of the pillows that they lay and moved on were afire. Small red flames came and vanished like phantoms. Low, thick smoke gathered, curd-like and yellow, like mattress stuffing or fungus. Reid tried to recall any cigarettes but couldn't. Lorin started to scream, her eyes explosive as hydrangea blooms. In waves of shrieks she backed herself against the eaves. Mick, downstairs, heard her wildness and ran up. He took the water from the steamer, threw it on the pillows, threw the pillows through a window outside onto the lawn and went down. Lorin stopped. Reid saw her naked for the first time. Her face was trembling. Inside their sockets, her eyes seemed loose. And the skin-graft scar-tissue on her chest — Reid stared at it; he had not had his eyes open before, seen it, even felt it as a texture between them — it looked like scales. It made her look like a fish.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm sorry. But all I could remember was the car."

Reid started slipping on his pants; the smell of burnt pillow wadding, thick as fabric in his mouth. His own skin looked to him bruised and lumpy, like attic insulation. And in the current from the open window he felt dangerously cold. "Are you going?" Lorin asked him.

"I have to. Yes. I'm sorry. It's late." She looked sad. She looked grey and frangible as an ash. Still, Reid found himself amazingly angry at her. Twice he had gone through fire for her! Twice! This time he might never get the smoke out of his lungs!

"What's your schedule tomorrow?"

"Rehearsal all day. Concert at night."

"Next day?"

"Same."

"Next day?"

"Same."

"Next week?"

"We're going on tour. Ohio. Indiana — Bloomington. Madison, Wisconsin."

"Maybe when you get back."

"Sure." He rebuttoned his shirt, slipped his shoes on, tied them. He could feel her eyes.

"Just — please — don't hate me so much," she said to him. ". . .All right?" He could not assemble a response.

She came naked with him downstairs into the shop. There was a customer there, but she didn't seem to mind. And the customer, buying a pot from Mick, tried not to look. "I want you to have this," she said to Reid. She handed him a small amber glass globe which was open at one end, slightly pinched as if it had begun the gesture of dividing itself into two valves, like a heart. "I blew it myself," she told him. "When I was in China. When I was there in labor. It's my best piece."

"I can't. . ."

"Yes, you can," she assured him, touched his hand damply and pressed her lips. "I want. . ."

"Thank you," he said.

"Have a nice tour," she called as he moved away. The customer peeked.

"I will," he said. "Thanks."

"Maybe I'll see you."

"Yes."

"Goodbye."

"Bye."

When Reid started his car, he thought perhaps that it might explode, as he had seen a car do recently in *The Godfather*. On the drive home, the heat from the upholstery seemed to grow, and he pulled off into a shopping center, ran into an air-conditioned First National. Reid did not know precisely why he was there, but he stood nearly a half hour by the frozen food bins, watching the ice smoke rise up from the packages of frozen prawn and sole, trying to smell her breath inside the amber bottle, trying to construct just how the fire might have broken out.

That evening, at supper, Leah analyzed a dream she'd had the previous night: a room full of nothing but paperclips and eggs. After supper Reid and Bethy took their weekly refuse trip to the Simsbury dump: standing at dusk amidst small choruses of flies, watching plastic shampoo bottles catch the heat and snake; labels on aluminum cans turn brown suddenly and burn. That night, all night, there were no more fire engines for him, real or dreamt, in the air.

But the next day, when Reid drove past Ten Han's on his way to rehearsal, way to work, he discovered that it had been burnt to the ground. All of the glass was charred. All of the timbers and shutters; the doors, stairs, beams were ash. And there were hundreds of small glassy puddles all over the lot; cobalt, amber and gold. Standing over them Reid could see them all carbonated with air bubbles. Standing away, though, they looked like rainbow constellations — or eyes. □

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HUGH OGDEN

FLIGHT 747

Someplace in the middle of Asia
you scanned the sky, held your hands

to your flesh high over the Khyber,
saw from above your life pass,

the river's torrent in reduplicating
fervor, fearful, taken to a birth

no one saw you through, in dryness,
the unaltered sun, a parched sky.

You could not look as if you had
never come out of yourself, but always

otherwise, turned inwards:
They, wrapped in togas, holding

their hearts in their eyes,
their tenderness out of light, the vast hordes

with sabered arms struck in agate.
One dies another lives. Mazar-I-Sharif,

cities of desert and plain,
turbulent horses where above

in civility you wing ascent, single,
into the blue opened earth,

a white spume floating in ambivalent
pleasure beyond pain.

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The Day We Buried Grandpa

A STORY BY CHESTER AARON

Grandpa worked the mines around Sundown for forty-eight years.

In all those forty-eight years, except for the usual busted fingers and toes, and a couple blasts that had smeared his body with blueblack coal spots, he'd not been badly hurt. Then, in 1926, an explosion in No. 5 was followed by a fire and forty-two men died. Grandpa was one of three men brought out alive.

Both of Grandpa's legs were broken, one just above the knee and the other just below. His back was broken in two places. When he was able to walk again, about a year after he got out of the hospital, he was no longer six feet two inches tall. His left leg ended up three inches shorter than his right so he leaned to his left.

When he built his first coffin Grandpa forgot to make allowances for that angle and twist of his body. The coffin was too narrow at the shoulders because, from the hips up, his body angled twelve inches off to his left.

He built the second coffin twelve inches wider. After he lined its walls with tufted cotton and dark blue satin, Grandpa climbed inside and lay down. There was so much space from the hips down, he decided to tear it apart and build a third one. "I want it to fit me," Grandpa said. "Nothin's ever fit me. Coats, hats, shoes. Always been someone else's clothes. They never fit me. I want my coffin to fit me close and snug. I'm gonna be down there a long time."

The third coffin, shaped like a slightly bent elbow, took six months to build. Three months more than the other two. It was more difficult but he also worked in the summer and the fall, when he had less free time.

During those five years after he got out of the hospital, Grandpa lived with us. Including him, there were six of us in the house.

He raised about thirty White Leghorn chickens and he shared a cow with two other widowed miners. In the summer and fall he could walk up the hill to town, where he spent several hours every day selling eggs and butter and Mom's home-made bread. Sometimes he'd take time off from building his coffin and he'd do some carpentry for the people in town. He handed over every penny he earned to my dad.

The miners in Sundown hardly ever bothered to work on their homes. If repairs were needed they were usually done, sooner or later and usually later, by a man the Company sent over. If there had been work to do and if there had been money to hire a carpenter, no one in Sundown would have hired Grandpa. Even Dad admitted that as a carpenter Grandpa made a fine miner.

Whether at our house or behind the Jew's grocery store or, at night, inside the store, most conversations with Grandpa got around eventually to reminiscences about cave-ins or explosions in the mines over the past fifty years. Or about Grandpa's funeral plans.

To make sure Dad would remember them Grandpa gave him the same instructions every few days. Everyone in Sundown could repeat them, almost word for word. Right down to the fact that it would be me, Goose, who'd throw the second shovel of dirt on the coffin. The president of Local 212 would throw the first shovelful. Grandpa was a charter member of Local 212 and the Executive Secretary in the Regional Office had promised that when

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there was a funeral, officials of the Union would be there.

When Grandpa first told Dad that he wanted to be buried at the top of Saddleback Ridge Dad tried to argue against it. But Grandpa insisted that it would be there or nowhere. He'd worked in just about every mine in the countryside but he'd started in No. 2 and he'd stayed there longer than he had at any of the next seven mines he worked in. No. 2 was inside Saddleback Ridge and Saddleback Ridge was where he'd be buried.

"Whatever you say, Dad."

The agreement satisfied Grandpa.

Grandpa often said that in the eleven years he'd been at No. 2 he must have tunneled under the entire mountain. "I know the guts of Saddleback Ridge better than I know its face."

After Grandpa moved to No. 3, the mouth of No. 2 was closed. It wasn't worth anything to the owners anymore. The coal was gone. "We'll pay more for compensation for men who get caved in on," one of the owners said, "than we'll get for the coal we take out. Close her up."

Grandpa said they ought to have leveled the hill and planted it with corn and potatoes for the miners. "It's rich soil," he said. "It oughta be, I'll tell you. It's been fertilized by the bodies of two hundred good men. Maybe three hundred." Whenever he talked like that, about No. 2 mine and Saddleback Ridge, he got a far away look in his eyes. "Another reason I gotta be buried there. That's where all my friends are."

For the third coffin Grandpa used oak planks soaked in creosote so they wouldn't rot. At least not for several years. "I want to spend my time up there on the hill watchin you sorry bastards hikin down them tracks to No. 3 and No. 4. Every mornin. And hikin back every night. Yessir. I'll enjoy that. Then, when I aint there no more, when all my bones is gone and I go off to wherever it is I'm goin, I'll go happy."

"Michael, you sonofabitch," Stash Pilco said, "we're gonna bury you with dark glasses on your eyes. So you can't *see* the tracks."

"Gonna bury you face down," Cosco said. "You'll have one hell of a time seein us anywhere, you layin face down up there on top of Saddleback Ridge."

Ellsworth Cotton tried to join the fun. "We're gonna bury you the other side of the ridge, Michael. So you can only see the new highway. You can count the crackups."

Grandpa pointed a gnarled, blue-specked finger at Ellsworth Cotton. "You get Gilbert to go gainst my orders I'll come back and haunt you. I swear." He nodded and shook his finger at everyone in the Jew's store. "That goes for all of you."

He died in his sleep on a Friday night and Dad scheduled the funeral for Monday morning. He spent four dollars at the Jew's and bought a new mackinaw. The old one was so ragged, he said, he was ashamed to wear it to Grandpa's funeral. Mom kept the old one. "It'll be a good work jacket," she said. "In a couple years, he keeps growin, Goose can wear it."

It rained Monday morning, and there was thunder and lightning all day. Dad put the funeral off until Tuesday. When the rain, instead of stopping, grew worse, Dad decided to wait until Wednesday. Mom said that no matter what, it would have to be Wednesday. The stink was making her sick.

The rain did die down Tuesday night but the already cold wind grew colder. Wednesday morning there was a soft drizzle, like a heavy fog.

Three officers from Local 212 arrived at 9:30, all of them wearing black rubber raincoats and carrying umbrellas. That made it official.

Dad and Harley Kramer lifted the top half of the lid in place and Dad screwed it down. He had to unscrew it after I found the carton of Mail Pouch chewing tobacco under one of the wooden horses that held the coffin. Grandpa had always said that Indians were buried with their weapons and when he was buried he didn't want his pick or shovel or even his carbide lamp, he just wanted a carton of Mail Pouch.

When the lid was screwed down again Dad nodded at the six miners who'd agreed to be the pallbearers. The crowd of relatives and fellow miners fell back. The pallbearers lined themselves along the sides of the coffin. They grabbed the brass grips Grandpa had screwed to the sides, lifted the coffin off the horses and marched toward the door. Before they took six steps the grip Harley Kramer was holding pulled out of the board. Harley stumbled and the other five men were caught off guard by the shifting weight. They almost dropped the coffin. Dad got the wooden horses under the coffin again and everyone waited until he screwed the grip back in place with longer and heavier screws. Then the men lifted the coffin again and marched toward the door. It was too narrow.

"Hold this," Dad said. He took off his jacket and handed it to me. He and several other miners crawled under the coffin and stood outside, on the porch. They held up one end while other men, inside the house, held up the opposite end. All the pallbearers crawled under the coffin and waited on the porch. Each man then stepped into place as his grip appeared.

Followed by the mourners the pallbearers carried the coffin to the Ford pickup truck the Jew was letting us use for the funeral. The coffin stuck out over the tailgate so far that all six pallbearers had to sit on the opposite end, to weigh it down, so it wouldn't tip off the truck. Dad put on his mackinaw again and he and Mom got in the cab with the Jew, who drove the truck.

The Ford moved through the rain. The mourners, wearing boots or galoshes, jackets or raincoats, sloshed along behind, heads bowed against the drizzle and the wind. Most of the women had heavy shawls over their heads. I wore my red mackinaw and my red leather

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hunting cap, the ear flaps down against the cold wind. Some of the other kids, slipping and sliding in the mud, raced the Ford truck. Being a member of the dead man's family, I couldn't run or play so I stayed behind, walking slow. Benny Kahn and Roman, my closest buddies, stayed with me. The other kids, unable to keep up with the truck, finally came back with the rest of us. We followed the truck to the bottom of Saddleback Ridge.

The Jew and my Mom and Dad and the pallbearers got out of the truck. I held Dad's mackinaw when he and the other men lifted the coffin off the truck bed and set it on the wooden horses that had been brought along in the truck. The rain was more than just a light drizzle by the time the thirty or forty mourners gathered around the truck. There were two or three rolls of thunder and a couple cracks of lightning. Dad put on his mackinaw, turned up the collar and said he was sure glad he'd gone ahead and spent the four dollars.

"You should know," the Jew said, "four dollars was the wholesale price. A funeral gift. The old man and me, we talk to each other. Like two men."

Everyone stood around the coffin, looking up at the hillside. Stash said, "Let's get it over with, Gilbert, before it starts pouring." Dad gave Stash a mean look. He said something to the pallbearers and they lifted the coffin and we all started up the hill.

We were about ten feet from the truck, picking our way through the grass, and the pallbearers were grunting and groaning, when Paul Krepinevich, the last pallbearer on the right, said, "Hey, Gilbert. A board's giving way under there."

The pallbearers, panting, wet more from sweat than from the rain, were glad to stop and rest. I held Dad's jacket while he kneeled in the wet grass and checked the coffin. He told everyone to wait right where they were and he ran to the truck. He came back with a hammer and a pocketful of nails. Because the oak was so hard he bent several nails but he finally had the board back in place. After he waved for everyone to go on he got up and put on his jacket.

By now three or four of the older women and men had started back to Sundown, along with the smallest kids. The officers from the Union kept mumbling that whoever it was got them involved in this ought to be here. They didn't say it loud enough for Dad to hear but I heard them. They kept their eyes on the ground. When the miners started climbing again, they followed.

Stash shouted, "Gill. Up here, goddamn it to Hell."

Dad pulled off his jacket as he ran forward. Right after I grabbed it, he fell. When he got up his hands and knees were smeared with mud. Another board had sprung loose and part of Grandpa's arm (it looked like the elbow) was sticking down through the opening. Dad crawled under the coffin. He had to lie on his back to get enough leverage to force the arm back up inside. After he nailed that board back, bending only one nail, he crawled out, covered with mud from his feet to his face. The coffin moved forward again, up the hillside. He shook his head when I held out his jacket. "I'm too muddy," he said. "Hold it." His whole body was shaking and his teeth were chattering. The Jew tried to convince him to put the jacket on, it could always be cleaned, but Dad shook his head and told me to hold it.

One of the Union officers, slapping his hand at his chest, apologized to my dad and said he thought he better not try to go any farther, he had a bad heart. He'd never forget Grandpa, he said, and how he fought for the Union, but he didn't think he ought to go any further. He stood, his shoulders hunched over, shaking his head and slapping his chest, while the rest of the crowd continued up the hill.

My dad didn't wait to be called when the next board groaned and broke free. It was followed by a foot in a polished shoe that dragged in the mud. Dad, on his knees under the coffin, crawled and kept crawling as the pallbearers kept moving the coffin. He fought for several minutes before he finally forced the foot back inside. Moving and working the same way he did when he was down in the pits, lying flat and picking away at the coal face, Dad crawled, fitted a board, nailed, crawled, fitted another board, nailed, crawled.

There were only about fifteen mourners left. All the women had gone back to Sundown. So had all the kids, except Benny and Roman and me. The Jew, who'd run back to get Grandpa's shoe, caught up with us, huffing and puffing. He handed the shoe to Dad and Dad looked at it and then shoved it into his back pocket.

The two Union officers were holding each other up. One of them fell suddenly and pulled the other one down into the mud, on top of him. They stayed there while the rest of us kept climbing the hill. Then they stood and went down.

Dad was shivering so badly now that both Mom and the Jew yelled at him, saying he'd catch pneumonia. Finally he agreed to put on his mackinaw.

We were about fifteen feet from the hole Dad and I had dug in the top of the hill when there was another sound of nails being pulled. Dad dove beneath the coffin, crawling, hammering, pushing Grandpa's arms and legs inside, bracing boards in place with his head, his shoulders, his back. As he kept working and crawling he kept nailing the boards. Once, when he cursed and shouted louder than usual, I thought he'd hammered his finger.

When we reached the hole the pallbearers, gasping and coughing, looked behind them for whoever was supposed to be carrying the wooden horses. The horses were still in the pickup, at the bottom of the hill.

"All right, Gilbert. Now what?"

Dad, under the coffin, was kicking his feet and rolling back and forth. He said he'd be right out and then they'd just let the coffin down in the hole but they'd have to wait a second until he got out. He kept rolling and kicking his legs.

A blast of thunder shook the ground. Everyone *thought* it was thunder.

"Jesus Christ," Cosco said. "The grave's caving in."

The ground kept shaking after the thunder stopped.

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There were several trees ahead of us and a boulder as big as the trees, about fifteen feet tall and as wide as a house. You couldn't see No. 3's tipple because of them. All of a sudden those trees, four of them, sank out of sight. The boulder moved, started sliding and then rolling toward us. Then it disappeared. It sank beneath the surface of the ground as if the ground had been water.

"She's caving in, Gilbert. The whole ridge . . ."

Several people turned and raced down the hill, falling and tumbling and getting up and sliding and falling and tumbling.

"Gilbert," Mom screamed, "where are you?"

"I'm under this goddamn coffin, goddamn it."

I got down on my hands and knees. There he was, trying to free his jacket, which he'd managed to nail to the underside of the coffin.

"Me," Paul Krepinevich said, "I'm gettin out of here." But before he could take a step the ground gave way beneath him. He dropped into the ground to his hips and probably would have gone deeper if he hadn't reached out and grabbed the bottom of the Jew's jacket. Running, slipping and sliding in one spot, the Jew, without trying to, actually pulled Paul right up out of the ground. The other pallbearers laid the coffin down on its side, so they'd not smash Dad. The coffin was no sooner down than the ground beneath it began to collapse. The coffin began to slide into the ground. Everyone except Mom and me turned and ran down the hill. I started toward Dad but Mom, screaming, grabbed me and we ran, the ground breaking beneath our feet as we traveled across it.

The ground kept shaking. The rain that had been a light drizzle earlier was now falling in thick, heavy sheets. A streak of lightning tore the sky into pieces of purple and orange and white.

From the bottom of the hill, I looked back. The coffin was angled up, on end, with Dad fixed to it, hanging like a sloppily nailed, screaming and kicking Jesus Christ. While I watched, another streak of lightning seemed to strike right at the coffin. In the flaming flashing light I saw Dad hanging limp, head and arms down. God killed him, I thought, out of mercy.

The top of the hill bulged up and sank down and bulged up again and then shifted back and forth like thick syrup. The coffin, straight up now, with Dad still nailed to it and kicking his legs and waving his arms, began to sink, very slowly, straight down.

When I couldn't find Mom at home I ran to the Jew's store. The miners were standing around the coal stove, their clothes steaming, their faces grim. They all grew quiet when I walked in. Harley Kramer put his arm around my shoulders. "Your dad was a good old boy," he said. "A good son and a fine miner. The best Union man I ever knowed."

"Not many sons woulda done what he done. No sir."

"Died in the line of duty you could say."

"I woulda probably dug a hole in the back yard and just dropped *my* old man in it."

"Not Gilbert. No sir."

Cosco said a kitty would have to be gotten up for the family. The Jew said there ought to be a sign or something, like those signs on monuments, at the top of the hill. Jacob Kahn, who'd been taking care of the store while his dad was at the funeral, said the sign ought to have these words:

Rest in peace
Michael Thomas and son, Gilbert
Two good men
And two loyal members of the
United Mine Workers of America.

No one said anything and then Ellsworth Cotton said it was almost worth dying to have something like that over your grave. Stash said he had a special piece of walnut at home and he'd carve those words in it if Jacob would just write them out. Jacob did. Cosco said maybe those three Union officers would come out again the day we put up the sign. The Jew said the place could be made like a park, with benches and maybe even flowers. He had all kinds of seeds.

"I'll make the benches," Harley Kramer said.

"I'll help," Paul Krepinevich said. "I'd be honored."

The store door burst open and Dad rushed in, making more noise than the storm outside. He wasn't wearing his new mackinaw. He was just in his shirt. One sleeve of that had been torn off at the shoulder.

He saw me and started slapping me and knocking me around, screaming he'd raised a traitor. A son who ran away when someone in this family was in trouble was the worst kind of traitor God ever made. Then he saw Paul Krepinevich and he left me to grab Paul. He was beating on Paul's head and face, screaming, "Traitors, deserters. You'd desert your comrades. You'd just stand by and let one of your comrades die. You bastards."

It took six men to calm Dad down. He finally relaxed. The Jew took a bottle of beer from the icebox and gave it to Dad. "Here," he said. "Celebrate. You're alive."

Dad went to the stove. He stared at the flames through the open grating in the door. "Jesus," he said. "That was close." He turned the bottle up and drank all the beer without taking the bottle from his mouth. He dropped his arm to his side when the bottle was empty. He belched. "Well, old Dad's in the hill, where he wanted to be."

"Yeah," Harley Kramer said. "But he's down just a leetle mite deeper than he expected to go."

That night, in our shack in the woods, Benny Kahn and Roman and I were talking about the funeral and Benny said he bet Grandpa's coffin was in one of those underground rivers that flow through deserted coal mines. "I bet it will sail forever," Benny said.

Three days later, when the rain stopped and the sun came out, Benny and Roman and I climbed the hill to try to find Grandpa's grave. The hilltop was flat and level. You couldn't tell where the trees or the big boulder or the grave or anything else had been. There wasn't anything to block the view of No. 3 mine. □

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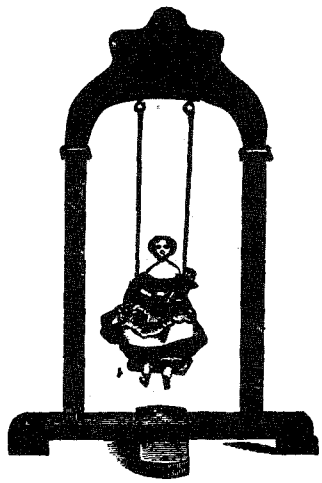

QUEEN LOGIC POEM

i

Queen you are logic too
what we think.
Whatever angel it was who
touched you first
touched reason.
Twas the season
of luck.

Without you we pick up chores
in the blubbery mind
and lay them down.
We're badly designed.

Without you we watch our eyes
grow thick in the looking-glass
until at last
they blur and fail.

Without you we leave the world
lonely and hard to bear.
With you we leave it green,
total, entirely there.

Queen you are what we think.
But what we think is the world
and the world is full
and so are we.

Queen you are logic,
and epistemology.

ii

Queen logic poems appeal.
They rise like giant turtles
from the mind's night slime
they climb into the air.
See how they drip the world
from their horn scales.
We run under the giant turtles
gathering their deep thick drops in pails
and run off with these.
They make dark ink.
We put in to page.

iii

Queen logic is deep.
It sleeps on the ocean floor like a pet
til it wakes.
Then like Aphrodite it mounts
through a calyx of waves.
It shines on the still
surface of the sea like a bloom.
We come on it there.
Sailing in the still afternoon
we come on that long elegant
net in the sky.
We don't know why.

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iv

I planted queen logic here.
It had a terrible tendency to disappear,
and I wanted it firm.
In spring it began to grow.
I watched the sprigs
branch into order
like Copi's *Logic*.

No single connective lacked.
No 'and' no 'but' not 'thus.'
Was there 'thus' in fact?
Was anything first?
Was there any ground?
Wasn't *even the ground*
wrapped in the whole like a sonnet
wrapped in the hold of its sound?

v

I don't know now.
I ate the plants.
Ate the connectives, the nouns
that pointed, the verbs that did;
ate all that sense.

Now logic is still.
Diamonds are budding
dully
in a lonely place on the hill.

vi

They darken.
Left in a room they take
on the shadow deep in the wall.
Left in abandoned buildings
they curl and break
into shreds,

But the trees that grew. These
are still high crowns.
On all sides they mount.
We shrink from their height.

In the little papers
of bark we write
queen logic works.

It gets dark.
In the forest you find your way
by our marks.

vii

Queen logic goes to sleep
like everything that is deep and at peace.
It sleeps in the trees.
It sleeps in gardens, bedrooms, cams
old homes, the law, the jail,
the night clerk leaning against the rail
of the next door bar.
Queen logic is what we are tonight,
or whenever we lie tight.

The old sky blooms and quietly takes the bed.
The clouds come and lie beside us.
The ocean rocks on the floor.
We hear our atoms,
their ponderous symphony in the head.

viii

We are others there.
We are others too still to find
but found
turning inside.
We are others. Bride,
lie by us too.
Wreathe us with light.
We have someplace to go.
Now let us see it,
let us see its logic.
Let us steal into your logic by night.

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Richard Howard: Names, Emblems, Tongues

Field Guide: surely not to a landscape full of what Stevens called the somnambulations of poetry, but a wide-awake, littoral accounting of the world of pepper trees and shared meals:

> . . . modest local gods, tough barked,
>
> of an easy grace and bitter fruit
> which grow in riven country near the sea
> where spring is clement and the land an aftermath.

If *Field Guide* is the most impressive of the books so far published by Stanley Kunitz in his stewardship of the Yale series, it is because Robert Hass suggests so many directions in which he can go beyond the series, because he has farther to go. It is a pleasure to agree with Mr. Kunitz that "The Nineteenth Century as a Song" is the best of one branch, the erotic fantasia on themes of historical misprision; that "Lament for the Poles of Buffalo" is a public poem agitated and propelled by the thrust of current affairs; it is more than pleasant, it is pertinent to pluck out of his preface Mr. Kunitz's characterization of this poetry's effect upon us as "the satisfactions of an art committed to making felt connections between words and body, between body and world." But perhaps that sounds a little too much as if Mr. Hass and Mr. Kunitz were merely in favor of virtue. "The danger is / to moralize / that strangeness," as Hass says here, *drifting toward the name of things*. What is strange and telling in his book deserves a closer look, a touch of sin. What is it that makes these ruefully anti-intellectual poems—

> . . . The sun was on my neck.
> Some days it's not so hard to say
> the quick pulse of blood
> through living flesh
> is all there is

—what is it that makes them *perform?* Hass himself is glad to *in*form; in a recent review of James Tate, he has said: "a riddle is reluctant speech. It is uneasy about naming its object. It hides the names of gods . . . it's when the world is not thinking of us that it becomes a riddle."

There we have it, I think. That is when Hass wants to collect his poem from the ignorant particulars of the world—when the world is not thinking of us; so that the writing becomes a riddle, doing its work—intricate, stupent, cowled—without the moralizations of a *given language* upon it ("of all the laws / that bind us to the past / the names of things are / stubbornest"), but only the discoveries of a taken one. "My eye performs the lobotomy of description," Hass writes, chillingly, of these west-coast eclogues, writes as much *in them,* reminding us that an eclogue itself is a selection, a writing culled. No ideas but in things, indeed: "there are times," this guide to the field offers as a corollary, when "I wish my ignorance were / more complete." A great deal is left up to ignorance, then, and put down to love—there is the confidence that when the world is opaque enough it is a poem or at least a riddle, an aphorism, a wisdom broken without the mediation of the poet, without the poet's breaking in: "It all seemed real to me / last week. Words. You are the body of my world, root and flower . . . I miss you, love . . . you're the name of things." Perhaps nothing can be so opaque which seems as opaque as all that. I think Mr. Hass persuades us to have no ideas butt in ("slices of green pepper / on a bone-white dish") because perhaps he is something of Stevens' somnambulist after all, because he knows there are no things but in our ideas about them; is this not the somnambulism of a new music?

> Hemlocks grow cerebral
> and firm in the dim attenuation
> of the afternoon. The longer
> dusks are a silence
> born in pale redundancies
> of silence. Walking home
> I follow the pawprints of the fox.
> I know that I know myself
> no more than a seed
> curled in the dark of a winged pod
> knows flourishing.

In our poetry's running fusillade between the visionary recital and the naturalistic view, between Emerson and Thoreau, between Wallace Stevens and William Carlos

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Field Guide, by Robert Hass. Yale. $5

Striking the Dark Air for Music, by William Pitt Root. Atheneum. $3.95 (paper)

Two Citizens, by James Wright. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $6.95

Writings to an Unfinished Accompaniment, by W. S. Merwin. Atheneum. $3.95 (paper)

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Williams, Robert Hass seems to me to stand surprisingly —and graciously—in the line of fire.

* * *

Reviewing William Pitt Root's first book, *The Storm*, in 1970, I said that his poems then cast about for transcendence by emblem, for release by violent juxtaposition. That is no longer the case, or even the casualty, though what is constant still is Root's fanatic unconcern for measure, for any device of recurrence above the tension of his own voice. These poems do not cast about at all, they clearly—well, as clearly as a great indulgence in the estranging blank of white paper can abide, the narrow stain of print murmuring between measureless meadows of margin—sink into themselves now, without emblem, without transcendence, rapt rather in a trance described by the title (from a line by Robert Duncan), the unstrung, indeed the stringless, harp affording only the untenanted tunes of silence, and the "dark air" not affording much of anything at all. Except for an opening cycle of family pieties, poems attached to the rituals of hunting and homecoming, venations and vindications, this book consists of an astonishingly detached—fenestrated, *exposed*—sequence of "songs", as Root calls them, by which he means nothing so recuperable as verse, nothing so predictable as prosody; he means, I guess, the notation of one man's voice as he chooses to set it on the page, a waif of transitions, an orphan of utterance:

> I become the dark
> background for all beings, myself
> and not myself, having
> stayed just long enough
> to see what's coming
> what has been
> and how I pass from
> place to place, time
> after time.

When so many elements of what we have always liked, or pretended, or found it convenient to regard as the resources of poetry have been chucked, when *only* diction remains, then the response to such singular strictness is very much a matter of taste: so solicited, you like such a voice, or you don't. There will be nothing else on hand to keep you reading round this "orbit / innocent of the record it is!" I do like it, though I confess to a sense of beleaguerment by so much cheerful stupefaction, by so many unpunctuated moments when the poet claims no more responsibility than

> me the table and page
> on page unwritten there
>
> real and dangerous
> but nowhere
> known yet—a void inarticulate
>
> no way to say it . . .

Perhaps, though, beleaguerment is just the sense such a voice intends, the sensation at least that you are inescapably surrounded by what cannot reach you any other way, by the gasping diction "paralyzed" here, made to hold still, wrenched together "into the poems where / I've nursed the / unacknowledged / passions of my life," as Root says in his "Song Begging to Be Born". These *are* unborn songs; they are not stillborn, for they stir with hungry aspirations—to light, to warmth, to society, even: all the positive tropisms of the lonely poet in the suffocating womb—but they do not count on much in order to make their way. They travel very light, and your patience with their unpropped pulmonations will be tried: when a poet with access to so much more trusts only one means, the risk of your dismissal is his.

* * *

At the end of his *Collected Poems*, whose motto might well be a retrospective phrase from *Two Citizens:* "I love myself the ground", James Wright added some thirty uncollected poems, raucous and even rakish, for they included a blank page dedicated to his horse which had eaten that particular poem, and they described with an apposite leer what they were doing:

> not a poem
> not an apology to the Muse
> but the cold-blooded plea of a homesick Vampire.

The satisfaction of having in one volume most of the best poems of one of our best poets made me overlook the nature—fragmentary, inchoate, the vibrato out of control—of those "new poems" at the time, though now I see they were an alluvial deposit on which *Two Citizens* draws heavily, manifesting "a deep identity / with something under / the bare stones."

All these poems are of course written in "the one tongue I can write in . . . my Ohioan", and they are concerned, as Wright has always been, with that mythology of the insulted and injured to be located alike in southern Ohio and the poet's body ("helpless and miserable / dreaming itself / into an apparition of loneliness"). And they exploit that mythology with the insolence of utter conviction:

> The cracked song
> Of my own body limps into the body
> Of this living place [Chartres]. I have nobody
> To go in with
> But my love who is a woman,
> And my crude dead, my sea,
> My sea, my sepulcher, the crude
> Rhythms of my time . . .

But so deeply is the poet identified with something which has happened to him outside the poem that he cannot be bothered to make it into a coherence within the poem; the divine event is a *déjà vu;* it is, as he says, "a secret of blossoms we had no business / to understand, only to remember." As no more than a reader of poems, we remember, certainly—we remember that particular *stimmung* of James Wright's past,

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That lonely thing
That fears him, yet comes out
To look through him and sing;

and we note certain clues toward what is dimly apprehended as a sort of Ohio Osiris Complex here, the sense of disintegration in dark waters, the embrace of a tree, and a resurrection ("I rose out of my body so high into / that sycamore tree that it became / the only tree that ever loved me"). But my suspicion of Wright's legend of himself as the Torn God is confirmed by no more than scattered limbs, perhaps appropriately—"wound after wound, I look for / the tree by the waters"—and in the arrogance of these disjunct, choking poems, there are but glimpses, for me, of what I divine to be gathering on the far shore, the other side of "that water I rose from". In *Two Citizens* (Tammuz and Astarte, they are) and the thirty poems which precede them, I can discern only the night journey, the *sparagmos*, except for sacred moments like this one:

There used to be a sycamore just
Outside Martins Ferry,
Where I used to go.
I had no friends there.
Maybe the tree was no woman,
But when I sat there, I gathered
That branch into my arms.
It was the first time I ever rose.

Years ago, writing about Wright's early work, I spoke of his approach to "the ecstasy which is beyond desire because it is unknown to desire"; that is the ecstasy made up to here, but it is not *made* in the poems, it stands outside them, as of course ecstasy does.

* * *

A world of which we are, by living in it, dispossessed: that is W. S. Merwin's world—"the world is made of less and less", *unless* we can bring ourselves to forget. So there is an exercise in forgetting among these new "writings", a calisthenics of oblivion, a workout extending from mere numbers, counting,

going on to the alphabet
until everything is continuous again

go on to forgetting elements
starting with water
proceeding to earth
rising in fire

forget fire

—a characteristic process in this poetry of deprivals and erasures. In this eighth volume, published concurrently with his translations called *Asian Figures* (Merwin ransacks world literature for absences, for undoings even more exotic than the local product, and there are plenty here, Mongol, Arab, Sioux, Märchen and Egyptian Figures, though they are not translations, merely "someone touching / a silence / an opening"), Merwin sustains and a little attenuates the magnificent obliterations of *The Carrier of Ladders*, led on by what vanishes:

before me stones begin to go out like candles
guiding me

Without punctuation, without prosody, without companions, "speaking another language / as the earth does", he pursues his asymptotic phenomenology of thresholds, doors, passages, "the gates about to close / that never do". For the first time, I think, there is the aftertaste of method, an intimation of formula—as Merwin says, "you say nothing / once." The book's title gives us a clue to the difficulties of a raised voice in the fallen world; it is Merwin's first *self-conscious* title (by which I mean, nonmetaphorical) in the teeming procession of his works, the first title which acknowledges that he knows, when he confesses himself haunted by "something not done", that he must add "its story to my regrets / and its silence to my compass". The unfinished accompaniment is of course life itself, and these writings aspire to that condition of voiceless verse which would be the true obbligato: "on each journey there is / a silence that goes with it".

Naturally—or preternaturally, in the nature of the case—there are astonishing successes, poems which illustrate because they make illustrious the canon of "remembered darkness" that Merwin has made so incomparably his own: incomparably because, as I began by intimating and as Merwin spells out, "while we sign our names / more of us / lets go / and will never answer."

But there is a languor now in the elementals, a sense, in the stillness, of a lounging energy. When Merwin covers his tracks—"my memory / the flame far from the candles"—we are made to wonder if he doesn't really want to be followed, after all, into those wildernesses of white ease. Not that it is easy to *do*—this is a poetry of finely-honed collaborations between what is given out and what is held back or even taken in, a kind of fence-sitting on "the gate where the nameless / cries out". For all his imitators, only this poet among us sounds the true *lacrimae nihilis* note. But there is—if I hear him right—a pathos acknowledged at the end of this book, this *acknowledged text*. It is the pathos of a man who discerns that it is life which is the accompaniment to a finished writing.

Or so I read the invocation at the close, the heartbreakingly lovely poem "Gift" which ends or signs off on this blank hope, its very majuscules reminiscent of Shelley:

I call to it Nameless One O Invisible
Untouchable Free
I am nameless I am divided
I am invisible I am untouchable
and empty
nomad live with me
be my eyes
my tongue and my hands
my sleep and my rising
out of chaos
come and be given □

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Jerome Klinkowitz: How Fiction Survives the Seventies

There are three breeds of contemporary American fictionists: the establishmentarians, represented by Saul Bellow, John Updike, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, and occasionally Norman Mailer; the established innovators, among whom we number John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Donald Barthelme, and Jerzy Kosinski; and finally the truly disruptive fictionists, whose books are less widely read but of greater proportional influence in the critical progress of the novel—Ronald Sukenick, Raymond Federman, Steve Katz, Clarence Major, James Park Sloan, and Thomas McGuane. For all three groups the 1972-1973 publishing season was an incredibly productive year, since every one of the above fictionists except Bellow presented a major work during this period.

To continue this scheme: about every three or four years a writer from one group will move up to the next. It is the inverse cigarette-machine theorem of modern fiction, which keeps tastes changing and an element of sport in the business. Somewhere between the bright discoveries of *Goodbye, Columbus* and *Letting Go* and the more ponderous import of *When She Was Good*, Philip Roth ascended from Group 2 to the top; subsequently not even *Portnoy's Complaint* or *The Breast* could banish him back to the company of inspired creativity. And Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., is only a recent Group 2 graduate from the unread but imaginatively challenging bottom. For any market report to be more than an annual description of the remainder barrel, one should note what's going on with respect to changes among these three classifications.

The establishmentarians once again distinguished themselves through their familiar routine of prolific publication, hesitancy to innovate, and cattiness about sticking with established modes. Mailer collected some earlier essays in *Existential Errands* and wrote new ones, apropos of the Presidential contest, in *St. George and the Godfather;* his biography of Marilyn Monroe stood as the major contribution from this novelist become new journalist. John Updike's *Museums and Women and Other Stories* was his first collection in six years, the longest stretch in his career without one; during this time he'd begun to match some of Donald Barthelme's experiments in *The New Yorker*, but for this new volume they were labeled "Other Modes" and safely kenneled in the rear. Malamud's stories remained Malamud stories, recovering from the with-it debacle of *The Tenants*, and Roth's *The Great American Novel* wasted its title on a satiric exercise hardly above his extended *New York Review* column, *Our Gang* (which in 1973 was reissued in a special Watergate edition). The most impressive act in Group 1 this year was Bellow's silence. Rumored to be in line for the Nobel Prize, he may well have preferred to sit tight rather than risk blowing it with another desperate up-date like *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (which with its hideously inappropriate paperback cover is being shelved by booksellers as a science-fiction work).

In Group 2 there was more action, but largely a solidifying of several trends evident since its current members closed ranks in 1967-68. *Chimera* (Random House, $6.95), John Barth's trilogy of retold classical myths, is his first work since *Lost in the Funhouse* and stands as an allegory of his own exhaustion. As with the earlier collection, *Chimera* confuses the product of art with the conditions of its inception, a process which obviously fascinated Barth but often results in bad writing (he renames Dunyazade, sister of Scheherazade, "Doony"). "He was a writer of tales," a Barth look-alike explains himself to the sisters, "anyhow a *former* writer of tales in a land on the other side of the world." He confesses that as a popular vehicle the novel has died, and that "His own pen (that magic wand, in fact a magic quill with a fountain of ink inside) had just about run dry. . . . His career, too, had reached a hiatus which he would have been pleased to call a turning point if he could have espied any way to turn: he wished neither to repudiate nor to repeat his past performances; he aspired to go beyond them toward a future they were not attuned to and, by some magic, at the same time go back to the original springs of narrative." A later section becomes more painfully explicit: "Imaginative potency is as crucial to the daily life of his spirit as sexual potency," and it is precisely because Barth has suffered an exhaustion (if not castration) of the imagination that his fiction faulters. The last two parts of *Chimera* are marked with situation-comedy routines of male impotency, as Barth's women shrilly mock his fall from capability.

Throughout most of his recent work runs an uncomfortable confessional thread, that "Somewhere along that way I'd lost something, took a wrong turn, forgot some knack, I don't know; it seemed to me that if I kept going over it carefully enough I might see the pattern, find the key." Again, "he felt that a treasure-house of new fiction lay vaguely under his hand, if he could find the key to it." The answer Barth finds in *Chimera*, however, is no different from the fears voiced in his 1967 *Atlantic* essay, "The Literature of Exhaustion." "*The key to the treasure is the treasure,*" he writes, and finds himself back with Dunyazade and her sister parsing out the thousand tales and a tale of the Arabian nights. "The narrator has narrated himself into a corner," Barth admitted in his previous collection; now he finds himself turning "in ever-diminishing circles like a moth around a candle, till I feared we must disappear up our own fundaments." He has.

In 1973 Thomas Pynchon received more media at-

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tention for his mammoth *Gravity's Rainbow* (Viking, $15) than any other experimentalist since Barth. Since *V.* Pynchon has been fascinated by plots—not just his own, but those his characters make for him; his conclusion is that man devises his own paranoiac conspiracies to fill an otherwise unacceptable void. One wonders how much is really made up, and at the conclusion of his novel about Werner Von Braun's V-2 devices Pynchon reveals that the most popular artifact of the space and rocket age, "The countdown as we know it, 10-9-8-U.S.W., was invented by Fritz Lang in 1929 for the Ufa film *Die Frau in Mond.* He put it into the launch scene to heighten the suspense. 'It is another of my damned "touches," ' Fritz Lang said." In Pynchon's novel it devolves that World War II may have been a scheme simply for scientific advancement (or that men prefer to see it that way):

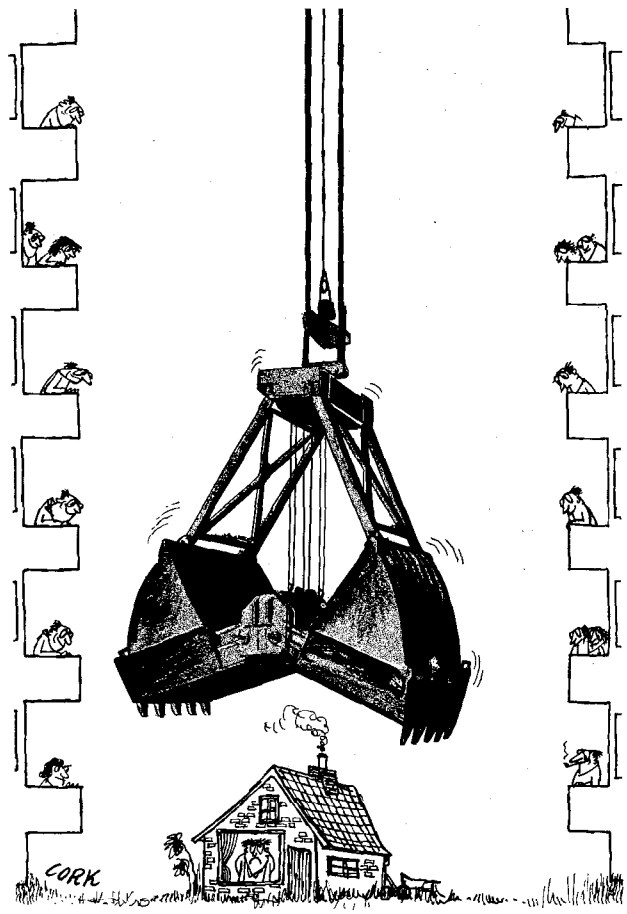
> It means this War was never political at all, the politics were all theatre, all just to keep the people distracted . . . secretly, it was being dictated instead by the needs of technology . . . by a conspiracy between human beings and techniques, by something that needed the energy-burst of war, crying, "Money be damned, the way of life of [insert name of Nation] is at stake," but meaning, most likely, *dawn is nearly here, I need my night's blood, my funding, funding, ahh more, more.* . . . The real crises were crises of allocation and priority, not among firms—it was only staged to look that way—but among the different Technologies, Plastics, Electronics, Aircraft, and their needs which are understood only by the ruling élite . . .

But Pynchon at least moves beyond Barth's spirit of parody into a substantial statement on an imaginative truth of our age, that the instruments of science now reflect a dimension of our souls.

Breakfast of Champions (Delacorte/Seymour Lawrence, $7.95) is Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s first substantial work since *Slaughterhouse-Five* and marks his return to fiction. Four years ago he announced he'd write no more novels, turning to drama and film instead. But now he has changed his mind: "I have become an enthusiast for the printed word again. I have to be that, I now understand, because I want to be a character in all of my works. I can do that in print. In a movie, somehow, the author always vanishes. Everything of mine which has been filmed so far has been one character short, and the character is me." His subsequent novel is about the "great depression," which includes the American 1930s, the ecology and survival potential of our planet right now, and most of all the very personal effect these events have had upon Vonnegut himself. He remembers the Thirties as a time when jocular impoliteness got one through the day, when Jack Benny, Fred Allen, and Henry Morgan helped us survive the decade-long "Blue Monday" by their black humor. But our own days of corruption, pollution, overpopulation, and decay are a different matter, for no one can hope as forty years ago "that the nation would be happy and just and rational when prosperity came."

For his novel to express all this Vonnegut calls up one of his most fantastic characters, the science-fiction hack Kilgore Trout, and puts him on collision course with Dwayne Hoover, owner of "Dwayne Hoover's Exit Eleven Pontiac Village," part of a Holiday Inn, and a string of Burger Chef's—possibly the most middle class creation in Vonnegut's career. Like Vonnegut, Trout builds fantasies of impossibly hospitable worlds, which are marketed as pornography. Meanwhile Hoover has been learning the relative and totally conventional nature of reality, since by amassing economic power he can increasingly effect changes in the world around him. But by the time of *Breakfast of Champions* the state of our planet has outstripped the limits of conventional middle class control. Ice-cream, aluminum siding, and even the martini euphemized in the novel's title, pale before the new synthesis needed to keep our dying world in order. Trout, arguing for the transformative power of ideas, of the imagination, writes a book explaining why things are so awful: every person, place, and thing in the universe is a robot, existing simply for the test of one human being as a free-will prototype. That prototype is Dwayne Hoover, the reader.

Sadness (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $5.95) is Donald Barthelme's best collection of short fiction. Philip Stevick remarked in a recent issue of *Tri-Quarterly* that Barthelme is the most imitated fictionist in America today, and *Sadness* stands as final proof of his well merited eminence. Throughout his career Barthelme has berated himself, and been berated by critics, for not writing novels; feeling he is unable to sustain works, he has



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publically resigned himself to "fragments." But although his latest work is arranged in a collection of short stories, it boasts the consistency of a novel, following out the implications of its lead story, "*Critique de la vie Quotidienne.*" Cushioned in his easy chair with nine drinks ranked on the side table, Barthelme's protagonist bravely faces his daily life, but the memories are catastrophic:

> I remember once we were sleeping in a narrow bed, Wanda and I, in a hotel, on a holiday, and the child crept into bed with us.
>
> "If you insist on overburdening the bed," we said, "you must sleep at the bottom, with the feet." "But I don't want to sleep with the feet," the child said. "Sleep with the feet," we said, "they won't hurt you." "The feet kick," the child said, "in the middle of the night." "The feet or the floor," we said. "Take your choice." "Why can't I sleep with the heads," the child asked, "like everybody else?" "Because you are a child," we said, and the child subsided, whimpering, the final arguments in the case having been presented and the verdict in. But in truth the child was not without recourse; it urinated in the bed, in the vicinity of the feet. "God damn it," I said, inventing this formulation at the instant of need. "What the devil is happening, at the bottom of the bed?" "I couldn't help it," the child said. "It just came out." "I forgot to bring the plastic sheet," Wanda said. "Holy hell," I said. "Is there to be no end to this *family life?*"

This and several other stories were originally part of an aborted novel, but assembled as they are they reflect the author's synthetic rather than fragmentary aesthetic, as they combine in *Sadness* to express the state of our daily life and consider what can be done about it.

Throughout *Sadness* Barthelme considers various palliatives: hypotheses in *The Journal of Sensory Deprivation,* experiments with a robot companion (" 'Crushed in an elevator at the welfare hotel!' someone would say. 'It's a very serious problem,' Charles would answer' "), and the practical expression of ideal systems, including inspiration-building cathedrals and sense-taming religions. In *Sadness* churches, catechists, and Jesuits outnumber even the serial shots of J & B; but with "forty-five adulteries to the average Saturday" of Confessions, "One wonders: Perhaps there should be a redefinition?" " 'I can will my dreams,' " argues a girl being shoved out of life in a literal "City of Churches," and for much of the volume Barthelme plays with those options. In "Engineer-Private Paul Klee Misplaces an Aircraft between Milbertshoften and Cambrai, March 1916," the artist confronts the ever-present secret police; fearing "damage potential to the theory of omniscience," they try to know everything to the last centimeter. Klee's interest is elsewhere, in " 'The shape of the collapsed canvas, under which the aircraft had rested, together with the loose ropes—the canvas forming hills and valleys, seductive folds, the ropes the very essence of looseness, lapsing,' " which he sketches. As for the missing aircraft, he diddles the manifest, " 'With my painter's skill which is after all not so different from a forger's.' " Once the papers are in order (all that matters), the police leave Klee to his art and a comfortable snack. " 'I am sorry about the lost aircraft,' " he offers, " 'but not overmuch. The war is temporary. But drawings and chocolate go on forever.' " But unlike Barth, Donald Barthelme keeps his aesthetic allegory under the control of the real world, a context his fiction will not ignore. It captures a world of bourgeois banality which it challenges us to transcend.

Jerzy Kosinski's *The Devil Tree* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $6.95) offers once again the story of a protagonist who would show himself a live soul among the dead. He proves his awareness in gripping incidents which have become Kosinski's trademark. Some are charming:

> On the crossroads outside Bangkok I used to wait for the villagers driving their carts home from the market.
>
> The drivers, who smoked opium all day, trusted their donkeys to find their way home, so that by the time the carts reached the place where I waited, the men were asleep. I would leap out of the bushes, approach each patiently trotting donkey and turn him around. The cart drivers never awakened. One day I turned twenty carts around.

Others are as horrifying as anything Kosinski suggested in *Steps* or *The Painted Bird;* but in spite of his freedom to do these things, his protagonist does little to transform his world. He cannot because he is heir to a gargantuan industrial complex, and is forever "a factor in other people's plans," regardless of how imaginatively superior he wishes to be. To be a free individual, a human being, the only living creature who can "imagine itself apart from the herd" is his desire. But such status is denied him, because his roots are other people's branches—hence "the devil tree." As does Barthelme, Kosinski demonstrates the structural art of handling the fragments of contemporary life in a sublimely synthetic manner—in a way which will soon be termed "organic," and herald the ascension of both these fictionists into Group 1.

The most brilliant event among the work of Group 3 was the publication of Ronald Sukenick's novel, *Out* (Swallow, $7.95). "It's all a lot of shid to me," says Jojo, a junkie character in the book. "I just pass it on; I do my best." This is Sukenick's own aesthetic; rather than have his fiction lie about what happens, he gives it to us as it happens to happen, in a way which preserves the feeling and energy and excitement of the events themselves. As happenings unfold in Sukenick's novel, the relationship of space to printed matter is developed as in inverse function in which the latter, predominant at first, yields to increasing space and forces the reader, in his act of reading, to accelerate as he continues through the book. With fewer and fewer lines to read, and with more space in between, his eye moves more quickly and the pages race by faster and faster, until the reader is shot out of it at the end like a cannonball. Although Barthelme remains for a time the most imitated, Ronald Sukenick is without doubt the most important new fictionist writing today, and *Out* confirms his status as one of the chief spokesmen for the life of the novel.

Following Sukenick is Raymond Federman, whose *Double or Nothing* (Swallow, $6.00) brings to American fiction the authority of the modern French experience. He handles the now familiar story of the hassles of adjusting to the incredibilities of American life by moving a

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step beyond Samuel Beckett, whose work claims that the novel form is inadequate to gain an understanding of reality, by leaping into fiction fully armed with a new form which *is* adequate. "Most works of fiction," Federman argues, "achieve coherence through a logical accumulation of facts about specific situations and more or less credible characters. In the process of recording, or gradually revealing mental and physical experiences organized into aesthetic and ethical form, these works progress toward a definite goal: the discovery of knowledge." But Beckett's (and in America, Federman's) world resists such order, so therefore Federman places his double or nothing bet on a sure thing: the book itself. This is the only reality he seeks to present: of so many pages, bound together, held by the reader. For his own part, to establish a valid fictional voice, Federman splits it in three: a protagonist to be described, an "inventor" to make up the description, and a "recorder" who transcribes the inventor inventing. Only all three events make a real story.

Most recent imaginative fiction has been working toward fresher structural approaches to the telling of stories. In *Saw* (Knopf, $3.50) Steve Katz experiments with a device somewhat in the manner of Julio Cortazar: for the story of a seduction he gives us all the trite details in the manner of the most conventional of narrators, except for one point—the seducer is a sphere:

> The sphere keeps rubbing her while he makes gentle philosophy. She begins to feel sexy. Perhaps the sphere is just handing her a line, she thinks, and wants only to get into her bed. She feels a pleasant tingling all over her skin. It can't be just a sphere of philosophy that makes her feel this way. The doubts and troubles she has fetched from deep within are slowly displaced by a round, rising dreamlike motion in herself. "You . . . you touch me like . . . like this," she says.

For the rest of his book Katz "fills the pages . . . the way fog fills a valley," in a fully unhysterical approach to narrative form. Clarence Major chooses a modular approach for his second novel, *No* (Emerson Hall, $7.95), with two voices passing back and forth the action, and a whole new metaphor for the black experience. The narrator observes of himself and his wife, "I have the trustworthy feeling that Oni and I are definitely on the way down, over, and out! Which, of course, implies that we were at one time in my opinion *up* from somewhere. Up from slavery?" Major tries instead the metaphor of prison; penal psychology and the image of life imprisonment hold his work together. That and a carefully controlled manner of running parts of the action backwards —a scene begins with the penultimate moment, a jump back to the moment just before, then to a sequence of events just before *that*, until by the end of the chapter narrative time has backtracked to the very beginning, when we are suddenly confronted with the end. This dramatic method is played against the quiet counterpoint of Major's two voices, following the action "as time took up space just happening." The movement is often as compelling as in Ronald Sukenick's *Out*.

A more subversive notion of structure is supplied by James Park Sloan in his second work, *The Case History of Comrade V* (Houghton Mifflin, $4.95). The novel is divided into thirds: a case history print-out of a hospitalized/imprisoned Soviet intellectual, this same man's diary, and finally "The Case History of Comrade V," a formal paper prepared by his supposed therapist. The three contend for authority: the first section is habitually described as "the printout, his case history, in other words, himself," and a factual error in dates can drive the patient into a mania for correctness. When this cannot be done, the patient becomes his own narrator in section two, where he presents an entirely different picture of himself. "The Case History" is a paper addressed to the theory that "certain monomaniacal syndromes are endemic to our age," Comrade V being the example. It is argued he is creating his world "by means of some obsessive crutch," which in some cases might have validity: "For both Galileo and Newton created such worlds and were seen in their time as monomaniacs. Freud himself did no less, his crutch being the human libido. His universe: human depth psychology." But in the present case "It is rather the utter psychic defeat of the self: the plight of an ordinary man too small to cope with contemporary life." Which would seem to seal the matter tight, except that the author of the paper is Comrade V, who has prepared the first section of this work as an empathetic novella. Sloan's genius is that he has found a way to combine the most sophisticated techniques of innovation in fiction with a structure at once as fascinating and surprising as that of the best popular suspense fiction; if there be one writer most likely to boost himself from the ranks of our more daring experimenters to the company of our most respected and successful fictionists, it is James Park Sloan.

Or perhaps Thomas McGuane. His third novel, *Ninety-Two in the Shade* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $6.95), is the story of Thomas Skelton, whose problem "was that like so many of us, he had tried quite hard not to be crazy." Twenty-two, a university drop-out, and occasional heavy doper, his life would be enough hassle without the fact that "Nobody knows, from sea to shining sea, why we are having all this trouble with our republic." On his way home from college Skelton follows the country's first artery, U. S. Highway 1, to its end in Key West, hyperbole of Florida "with all the gothics and grotesqueries of chrome and poured-to-form concrete that that implies."

There he would be a fishing skiff guide, simple enough but for the obstacles of a homicidal competitor and a resident father with his record of an insanity discharge from the army and bizarre failures in running a house of prostitution and the manufacture of blimps. These fancies, however, are not digressions, for Skelton believes that "life looked straight in the eye was insupportable, as everyone knew by instinct." His great trick: to avoid looking it straight in the eye. "Everything askance and it all shines on." He has learned this code from his father, a master in the art of side-stepping, who "dizzily evading all known goals, had become a chimera."

Apparently wishing to solve only his personal prob-

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lems, Skelton finds his life threatened by another guide who resents the intrusion. For someone who will not act and refuses to face things squarely, the threat is a dilettante's delight, providing the first wonder of living in a town where somebody wants to kill you. "That truly gave a community subjective structure."

The would-be guide and his senior rival set collision course, and the novel leads inevitably to murder, but McGuane's genius is that he avoids all the sterile predictability that such a plot implies. Toward the end one character finds himself looking foolish: "he didn't see how he could reiterate his threat or add some credence to it without reminding everybody of TV," and it is precisely this type of phoniness that the author avoids. *Ninety-Two in the Shade* is neither a character study nor an adventure tale, but rather an exploration of the presence and feeling of life in these times and these places. The work is almost its own model, with truth sought not in its depths but in its extent, which McGuane sustains brilliantly. Skelton: "For two hours he managed the control he needed, sitting as quietly at his breakfast table as a gyroscope." America: "Just beyond, the drive-in theatre screen loomed among the trailers . . . Appomattox Courthouse; Yankees and Rebels stately in the Key West sky. From the seaward vantage, it was the America you weep for. Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, knee-deep in mobile homes surrounded by the vacant sea."

Throughout his novel Thomas McGuane has avoided the gimmicks which too often allow the writer to slip away from a true confrontation with his material. In *Ninety-Two in the Shade* no distractions of technique deflect the author from his goal: not the meaning of life and death in Key West, but a revelation of its actuality.

Perhaps as for its very existence American fiction is driven to the wall, these three categories of contemporarity will dissolve. Evidence for it already exists when the largest selling novel of the year comes from the second segment, Vonnegut's *Breakfast of Champions*, and when a solidly Group 3 effort such as McGuane's *Ninety-Two in the Shade* captures all of pages one and two in the *New York Times Book Review*. Significantly, there was remarkable little media attention for the books by Updike, Roth, and Mailer; advertising was small, none made an impression on the bestseller lists, and few major reviews were filed (perhaps because few review copies were sent). It seems their publishers have settled into the comfortable sterility of the photo-reprint houses, selling a carefully weeded list to a stable market of libraries and Fifth Avenue bookstores. Smaller companies—Seymour Lawrence, Swallow Press, Emerson Hall—have done the most significant fiction, and will continue to do so this coming year, when New Directions issues Gilbert Sorrentino's *Splendide-Hôtel*, Swallow Raymond Federman's *Take It Or Leave It*, and heaven knows who a whole batch of manuscripts completed by Kenneth Koch, Jonathan Baumbach, Steve Katz, Ronald Sukenick, Kenneth Tindall, and many others still seeking editors. Perhaps there will have to be a fourth category in contemporary fiction: the brilliantly unpublished. If decent fiction is to survive. □

Circuses and Mythologies: Latin American Fiction

They call it the "boom" in Latin American literary circles from europeanized Buenos Aires to the expatriate colonies of France and Spain. It happened mostly in the late sixties, but it continues to give off sound waves which the Anglo-American reading public has only just begun to pick up. The boom is in a highly exportable commodity—fiction.

The harbinger was Jorge Luis Borges, the metaphysical trickster. As soon as university students learned how to untangle his fabulations, a new star arose—Gabriel Garcia Márquez, followed by Manuel Puig, G. Cabrera Infante, and José Lezama Lima. Biblical allegory, camp parody, wonderland games, signification tournaments; their range is prismatic and dazzling.

Before the advent of this faddish new wave, many Latin American novelists were appearing quietly in translation; Alejo Carpentier, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Miguel Angel Asturias, and José Donoso. Generalizations, as usual, are nearly impossible to make. But on the spectrum of the boom, there are a few common features: crowded landscapes, a "decadent" use of detail,

Miguel Angel Asturias: **The Eyes of the Interred.** Translated by Gregory Rabassa. Delacorte, $15.00.

Jose Donoso: **The Obscene Bird of Night.** Translated by Hardie St. Martin and Leonard Mades. Knopf, $7.95.

the fascination of corruption, the fond parading of national idiosyncracies coincident with a thoroughly critical attitude towards one's country, realism made magical or fantastic, the wit and humor of satire and parody.

The pandemoniac arena of Latin American political life is a circus in which perform the wild animals of general exploitation and the decimation of Indians, the high wire artists of chronic instability and illegitimacy of governments, and the clowns of conservative Catholicism and falangist militarism. The roar and the dust of the big tent was enough to make exiles of most of Latin America's best writers, not always voluntarily. Some, including Asturias, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Severo

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Sarduy, journeyed to France to commune with the Surrealists, the writers of the *nouveau roman*, and the young critics of the *Tel Quel* group. Others came to the U.S. Donoso wrote some of his first stories at Princeton, where he studied with the new critics R. P. Blackmur and Allen Tate. Later, he taught at the University of Iowa's Writer's Workshop where he left behind several rough drafts of *The Obscene Bird of Night*.

Partially as a result of exile, foreign literary influence has been widespread. One could construct a graph of sorts: Mario Vargas Llosa/ Flaubert; Gabriel Garcia Márquez/ Faulkner; Alejo Carpentier/ Breton; Julio Cortázar/ Durrell; G. Cabrera Infante/ Lewis Carroll. There is also a curiously incestuous inter-influencing. Carlos Fuentes admits that his novel *Aura* proceeds from José Donoso's novel *Coronation*. Donoso follows suit by claiming that his new novel would not exist if he had not read Fuentes. There is a yet deeper spring of influence. Some of these writers derive from their own sources in the mythology, lore, and religion of the Indian cultures; Asturias from the Mayan, Fuentes from the Aztecan, and José Maria Arguedas from the Incan.

The writers of the boom spread out between two predictable extremes. At one end is the *indigenista* novel whose chief concern is the plight of the Indians. (This is, indeed, one of Asturias's themes in *The Eyes of the Interred*. Playfulness with language saves his novel from falling into the oppressive seriousness of this kind of writing.) On the other end is the novel of purely linguistic gymnastics, Severo Sarduy its most famous practitioner. (Donoso's novel tends towards this extreme. Yet, though his book generates a symbolic language of its own, it is too much engaged with the specifically Latin American world to be called a pure example of this pyrotechnic extreme.) The Banana Republic Trilogy (1950-1960), of which *The Eyes of the Interred* is the third novel, helped win Asturias the Nobel Prize in 1967. Forced into political exile in 1954, Asturias returned to Guatemala in the sixties and is now ambassador to France.

The novel reflects the pacifist diplomat's abhorrence of the facts of history. His irony contains more than a suggestion of bitterness;

> It was the beginning of a time of fiction. He would have preferred not using that literary expression. But how else could one describe the parenthesis of light that was opening up in the daily life of people of bread and dreams except as a time of democratic fiction.

A revolution is about to take place. The regime of General Ubico, dictator of Guatemala for 13 years, will fall. An amazing student-led general strike, "*la huelga de los brazos caidos*," will bring reform and a leftist regime to the country. Banana plantation workers who have been tyrannized into forced labor will be given rights and power to negotiate with the United Fruit Company which has been exploiting them and their land since 1906. The time now is June, 1944. Fiction and history are about to come together. The final irony, outside of the covers of the book, will not come until 1954; then, a CIA-contrived counter-revolution will overthrow the leftist government which has demanded the return of lands appropriated by the Fruit Company. The "democratic fiction," itself the result of the spread of "democratic ideals" by U.S. troops stationed in Guatemala, will then be replaced by yet another fiction. In 1954 Asturias was finishing this novel—a celebration of the 1944 revolution. Disheartened by political events, he put the book aside until 1959, when he finally finished it; this time toning down the note of triumph in the ending to one of ambiguous hope:

> The Dictator and the Fruiters were going down at the same time and now those who were interred and waiting for the day of justice could close their eyes. No, not yet, because they were only on the threshold of that great day. Hope doesn't begin with what has been done but with what has been said . . .

Several names and events mentioned in the novel will be unfamiliar to those who have not read the first two novels of the trilogy, *Strong Wind* (1968) and *The Green Pope* (1971). Lester Mead, millionaire Fruit Company stockholder in disguise, helped native planters to fight the Company's expansion until a strong-winded hurricane killed him. George Maker Thompson, nicknamed "the Green Pope" in his pirating days, was the entrepreneurial soldier of fortune who acquired land for the Company by extortion. He reappears in the third novel as the dying Company president. In *The Green Pope* the white intruders are opposed by Mayari and Chipo-Chipo, believers in the telluric mythology of the Indian culture.

The apocalyptic revolution in *The Eyes of the Interred* resolves the dialectic of exploitation and rebellion which has been the story of the other two novels. Asturias goes contrary to Franz Fanon's dictum that all de-colonialization is a violent phenomenon; "Diligent, quiet, pensive, tolerant. They had never seen them like that. Never. They were like different people." His revolution is as visibly non-volent as a Greek tragedy; but, of course, history is offstage.

In the book, the organizer of the revolution, Octavio Sansur, worships Jean Paul Marat to the point of changing his name to Juan Pablo Mondragon. He chooses the revolution over his love for Malena Tabay, a school teacher:

> He had already thought about it night after night without finding sleep in the turns that he gave as he tried to reconcile his oaths to the people involved in the struggle for freedom and justice with that love that confronted him like a highwayman, asking for his heart and his life. To whom did his heart belong? To whom his life? . . . To them, to his comrades, in the struggle . . .

After an abortive assassination plot against *el señor presidente*, he changes his name to Tabio San and flees to the Pacific coast banana plantations. There he realizes that a revolution could only succeed with the help of the workers; "Overthrowing the military man of the moment and leaving the Fruit Company intact would be self-deception, and attacking the Company with the dictatorship still on top was impossible." On his return to Guatemala City, he

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enters friends' houses disguised as an ashman to gather support for the general strike:

> The proletarian ashball grew like an aristocratic snowball. Soon the 'ashman of freedom' no longer entered houses for the humble dust of calcinated fire wood but to bring and receive news of the preparations for the strike. The spark was missing.

The spark is provided by the banana plantation workers whose predicament is the focus of the novel. The descriptions of the Indians and Ladinos at labor in the tropical heat produce some of the most effective writing in the novel:

> The small creatures of the ooze slid away through the shadows, golden scorpions, the caddis worm, insect corpse bringing the image of death to the one pricked by its barb, the bats who spread mystery as they fly, and the shadows of the fruit loaders . . . His father had died hauling fruit. Dying like that, a man who had his wherewithal . . . dying in a vomit of blood under the crushing weight of a bunch of bananas . . .

It is difficult to dispraise such an important, even significant, book. Asturias manages admirably to keep his revolutionary polemics within the limits of his fiction. His novel has of course a definite anti-U.S. bent, and at times it does lapse into propaganda. And the history of intervention that excuses such lapses is certainly well known. The sourcebook which Asturias used to write the trilogy, *The Banana Empire: A Study in Economic Imperialism* by Charles David Kepner, Jr. and Jay Henry Soothill, begins with these words: "What is usually known as modern economic imperialism is one of the most characteristic and important historical developments of our time." The authors might have added that the revolution against imperialism is as important, and it is this that makes Asturias' novel a valuable document.

Nevertheless, it has its faults. His realism strains unsuccessfully against the encroachment of a sort of verbose fantasizing. Nagging, self-indulgent puns and a sometimes grating lack of irony might turn aside some readers before they reach the important second half of the novel: "Yes, but the name makes the saint, and as far as I'm concerned just San by itself doesn't seem right, better Sansur, the way I said, because you're on your way to being the Saint of the South." On a very commonsensical level, the revolution seems to take place too easily. The plot, as the schoolbooks would say, lacks overall tension.

In our time, the revolutionary novel has indeed come to be a separate sub-genre. Its ideology won't let it be ironic. Once committment has touched the book's vision, comparison with so called objective works is no longer possible. Some would group Asturias with Silone, Malraux, Orwell, and Leroi Jones. But that isn't important. What does matter is that a novel can be worth reading and not be "good." Asturias lacks ironic distance; that is true. Changing names and inserting cosmic metaphors does not turn a topical novel into a work of art; that is also true. But even more true is the fact that a novel can be valuable in its communication of the political and cultural mythology of a country, as Asturias has done, without satisfying the standards of the Anglo-American academy: the tough ironic texture and self-conscious structure of the Dickens-Dostoevsky-Balzac-Stendahl heritage. In fact, you might answer Karl Marx's question "What makes art an eternal value despite its historicity?" by saying that history itself is an "eternal" value whether or not you want to call it art.

* * *

Politics and the Indian problem belong to the early boom. Later writers have become experimenters delving into psycho-analysis, linguistics, tinkering playfully with the creative act. José Donoso belongs to this generation of writers.

Donoso deals in medallions, parodic emblems of a degraded world; "fantastic beings, grotesque monsters, carried out our mission of supporting that new medallion, holding it up straight from the outside, like a pair of magnificent heraldic animals." His heraldic emblems are witches, whores, dwarves, hunchbacks, aristocrats, servants, and perhaps even a saint.

At the altar sits an aging aristocratic woman with a child wrapped in rags in her arms. Around her in the rundown chapel, decrepit women kneel in adoration. The paroldy becomes grotesque when you realize that the child is really a withered old man with large sad eyes. His name is Humberto Peñaloza, or Mudito, as the old crones call him, the hero of *The Obscene Bird of Night.*

"Hero" is the wrong word to describe this process of disintegration by descent into hell, the infernal unconscious where desire, fear, and fantasy fuse into the oneiric atmosphere in which the obscene bird flies. The title comes from a letter of the father of Donoso's mentor, Henry James: "The natural inheritance of everyone who is capable of the spiritual life is an unsubdued forest where the wolf howls and the obscene bird of night chatters." Reading the novel makes belief in the spiritual life impossible, unless it be the spiritual life of witchcraft, black miracles, and normal, perverse, human demonology. Total skepticism, Donoso has remarked, is one of his intentions; skepticism towards religion, reality, class, and especially towards the unity of the personality. Personality is split, broken into pieces, dispersed. At times, the narrative reads like one of R. D. Laing's knots translated into incantatory language. The incantation draws a threatening circle around Humberto's retreating voice which projects his fears, some hallucinatory, some frighteningly real, onto the sealed corridors, the false windows, and, finally, the gunny sacks which enclose him. Humberto's personality is split into three "characters," each one a closer approximation to the center of the circle of paranoia: first, the young bohemian writer, secretary to Jeronimo de Azcoitia, the aristocratic senator who pays to publish his first novel, a biography of Jeronimo and his wife, Inés; second, the caretaker of La Rinconada, "the limbo of the faceless," where Boy, the deformed son on Jeronimo, is surrounded by gargoyles and kept innocent; and third, "the servant of servants," Mudito, perhaps deaf and dumb, put out of

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the way by Jeronimo with the coven of indistinguishable nuns, hags, and orphans of La Casa, a convent in Santiago.

In this novel, very little separates everyday superstition from schizophrenia. A simple legend builds a bridge between the miraculous and the insane. The servant of a Chilean landowner's daughter, "the original Inés de Azcoitia," ancestress of Jeronimo and Inés, each night took the form of a yellow bitch to plague the Maule River region. She was helped by a flying head, the *chonchon*, supposedly bearing the girl's face. The witch's almost lifeless body is found and sent floating out to sea by the girl's father. The dog is never seen again except in reincarnations throughout the novel. The girl spends the rest of her life in a convent where, "they say," she performs a miracle. One version of the legend has it that the girl was a saint, not a witch, whom the real witches wanted to turn into an *imbunche*, a person all of whose orifices are permanently sewn up.

The legend is both a parody and a paradigm of the novel. Donoso invented and inserted it after finishing the rest of the book. It infects the novel, tainting everything with superstition, or possibly witchcraft, or, even more likely, madness. The *chonchon* turns up in a fantastic voyeur's game created by Humberto around an orphan who becomes a prostitute to cardinals and heads of state, as long as they wear the cardboard giant's head which Humberto rents out. The legendary convent becomes La Casa, "graveyard for statues of old saints," as well as dumping ground for the Azcoitia family's castoffs. The yellow bitch reappears on the night when Inés and Jeronimo's mangled son is conceived. Peta Ponce, "ragged, old, crippled, filthy Peta," Inés's servant, is the witch reborn, at least in the disturbed imagination of Humberto who fears she wants to steal his sex. The modern Inés fails to have her legendary namesake, the girl/saint or girl/witch, beatified, because one version of the legend sees her as pregnant with child, not sanctity, when put into the convent. Humberto, half out of his own chicanery and half out of the delirium of the "murmuring flock" of women, becomes Inés's child—the modern Inés, that is—who invades La Casa after her failure in Rome. She becomes perennial winner at Dog Track where, of course, she bets on a yellow dog and cleans out the old women. One of her prizes is the orphan prostitute's child, purportedly fathered by Humberto, more by conjury than venery perhaps, who also happens now to have taken the place of the imaginary child. Mummified for his role as child saviour, Humberto has become the *imbunche*. His miracle will be to take the crones to heaven in white carriages. The carriages materialize as white buses which take them away to a "Children's Village." These Thracian women thank their Oedipus-cum-Orpheus saviour by wrapping him tightly in sacks and leaving him amidst the rubbish of the condemned convent. It is a horror-filled ritual in the style of Djuna Barnes or Ferdinand Céline.

The problem for reality-trackers, a hazardous pursuit in this novel, is whether to believe Humberto. Is he, like the girl in the legend, a saint or a witch? Or, is he just a poor man's son whose father wanted him to be "someone" like Jeronimo, but who got lost and was made mad by the world:

> this is the world, our laughing world, this élite, these chosen prisoners of those who envy we who envy only him, Don Humberto, who envies no one and is suffocated because there's no one for him to envy, but if you only knew that I do envy, I envy the one who invented me and put me here in the center of this envy that's suffocating me.

One of his "meanings" is obvious: the artist overcome by the uncontrollable element in which he works:

> . . . he started out by talking about that, but later on he distorted everything. Humberto had no talent for simplicity. He felt the need to twist normal things around, a kind of compulsion to take revenge and destroy, and he complicated and deformed his original project so much that it's as if he'd lost himself forever in the labyrinth he invented as he went along that was filled with darkness and terrors more real than himself and his other characters, always nebulous, fluctuating, never real human beings, always disguises, actors . . .

Tiresias' warning to the parents of Narcissus might have been the novel's epigraph: *si se non noverit* (if he never know himself). Deliberately and with daring, Donoso sets out to embody the myth of self-knowledge in his character. His Narcissus suspects that there is no self to be known; "I don't feel, I don't hear, I don't see anything, because nothing exists except this hole I'm in." If the self exists at all, it is just a travesty of what we imagine it to be, of what our words make it; "(if we don't wear some kind of disguise we're nothing) . . . no, Humberto, don't let Iris go on touching you because she'll break down your disguises, if you don't escape you'll have to be a self again, whose identity you no longer remember and that exists you don't know where . . ." In Humberto's universe, coming to know the self means extinction, an end to unified selfhood. Perhaps that is why attempts to retell his story, including this one, are to be distrusted as much as the differing versions of the legend; "It's an elastic changing tale . . ." Writing out of the world of Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, a world which displaces man as originator in the universe, Donoso shows the self to be a metaphysical myth, sometimes tragic, sometimes comic:

> . . . for Boy was to grow up believing that things came into being as his eyes discovered them and died when he stopped looking at them . . . the most important among the words Boy would ever know were all those signifying *origin* and *end* . . . Boy must live in an enchanted present, in the limbo of accident, of the particular circumstance . . .

Donoso claims that the novel wrote him; not he it. Even the author consents to be removed. The prophet becomes scribe, a hearer and a recorder of voices; ". . . they don't see me because I don't matter, I'm only passive matter onto which they gradually project their images." He has acquired the power of the old women who "fold time over and confuse it, they multiply and divide it, events are

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refracted in their gnarled hands as in the most brilliant prism."

Followers of Donoso's development from the numerous short stories through the first three novels, *Coronation*, *This Sunday*, and *Hell Has No Limits*, will recognize many familiar episodes and themes recurring, obsessionally perhaps, in the new novel. The decaying aristocratic family is still there; as are the servants who open doors to unknown worlds, the crotchety old women, and the anarchistic adolescents. His style has acquired complexity, but his words remain simple, arranged now so as to create a translucent ambiguity.

Thumbing through the first manuscript drafts of the novel, sheaves of long pages held together with clips and tape, reveals the arduous history of the work's shaping. Blue lines drawn through the typescript mark almost every page. Only a few pages might survive into the next version marked "*Otro version de lo mismo*" ("another version of the same thing"). The developing versions are named the Olivetti, the Perforated, the Purple, and the Eclectic. You can see him change from the still traditional story writer to the highly inventive fixer of paradoxical symmetries. The conversational monolog and the self consciousness are present as seeds in the opening of the first version; "Oh, Humberto Penaloza . . . you can't stop making sentences. You know they are your life . . . When I write this I am careful about every word" [my translation]. And so he is all the way to the final version.

It is an extraordinarily engaging novel, a psychic murder mystery in which our own selves are done away with. With this book, Donoso has become a diviner of the unconscious. He joins Kafka in being able to make absurdity personal. His vision of bleakness and dementia is upheld by his compassion and his ability to parody a degraded world.

Donoso, more than Asturias, exemplifies what the boom has meant for the intelligensia of Latin America; an escape from natural and political boundaries, a participation without dilettantism in Western culture, and the establishment of an authentic literature which expresses the particularity of Latin America without being "regional."

A note on the translations. Once again, Gregory Rabassa plays with polish his role of interlocutor between Latin America and the English-speaking world. His dedication shows, for example, in the obvious pains taken to find equivalents for Mr. Asturias's puns; "Estribo, a stirrup . . . You call me Estribo because I'm only good for stirring things up, right?" Leonard Mades and Hadie St. Martin's translation of Donoso's novel is, by contrast, careless and not always successful in transposing gracefully the form or the rhythm of the author's constructions.

—*Michael Ryan*

Is This Trip Necessary?

"This book is an exercise in historical actuality," says Michael Lesy in his introduction to *Wisconsin Death Trip*, (Pantheon. $15.00; paperback, $5.95) and then, in a representative burst of sentimental flatulence, he adds, "but it has only as much to do with history as the heat and spectrum of the light that makes it visible, or the retina and optical nerve of your eye." In fact, the book is an exercise in manipulation—a collection of photographs and brief prose passages, selected or created to convey the horror of small town life in the 1890s. In a preface, Warren I. Susman, of the Rutgers Department of History (where Lesy received a Ph.D. with this book as thesis), compares Lesy's method with that of Walter Benjamin, at least as Hannah Arendt describes it. The comparison is valid enough so long as it sticks to Benjamin's admission to "forcing of insights," but it becomes suspect when Arendt reminds us that Benjamin tried to avoid the possibility that "a given subject of investigation had a message in readiness which easily communicated itself, or could be communicated, to the reader or spectator." *Wisconsin Death Trip* is a message book and, as though he suspects that some readers will resist the message, Lesy imposes a rigid interpretation of his material in a conclusion that proclaims, "By the end of the nineteenth century, country towns had become charnel houses and the counties that surrounded them had become places of dry bones." There were apparently only two possible responses to the rural town, an identification with gentility and success or a recognition of failure, and these Lesy identifies as obsessive-compulsive behavior and paranoia. "Both were forms of behavior that sought to master childlike feelings of helpless panic re-created by the inhuman, amoral fluctuations of a market economy and by the equally inhuman ravages of epidemic disease."

I admit to a certain suspicion of psycho-history, but my distrust of Lesy stems from two other sources—his choice and interpretation of his materials and his refusal to tie his fragmented portrait of Black River Falls, Jackson County, Wisconsin, into the larger world where conventional historians work. Since the second of these doubts is the less legitimate, let me get it out of the way first. Although the newspaper items that Lesy uses are full of business and bank failures, unemployment and wandering tramps, there is little attempt to tie these local events into the pattern of chaos and unrest that marked the decade of the panic of 1893, the Homestead Strike, the Pullman Strike, the march of Coxey's Army, the birth of the Populist and the Socialist Parties. Nor is there an effort to put the events of Black River Falls into a context nearer to home, to explain—as Harold U. Faulkner did in *Politics, Reform and Expansion*—the transformation in rural America that turned the "tiller of the soil" into "a commercial farmer," or to let the reader know what even the most sanguine Wisconsin history

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would tell him, that lumbering along the Black River began to decline in the 1890s because the neighboring forests were being used up and the railroads, replacing the rivers as log carriers, were moving the industry into once inaccessible areas. Or, to move from the economic to the psychological, we are never told that Lesy's parade of proclamations of insanity—with or without suicide—is characteristic not alone of Black River Falls, but of contemporary readings of deviate behavior. The authors of *A Manual of Psychological Medicine* (1879), using asylum records from England, the United States and the Continent, explain that "Domestic Troubles and Grief," which includes money problems, and "Religious Anxiety and Excitement" are the two chief "moral causes" of insanity and that drunkenness is frequently a contributing factor in the first of these. Since, according to Wisconsin law, a person was certifiably insane when the county judge, on the advice of physicians, so declared him, it is inevitable that the newspaper reports and the asylum records reflect the conventional wisdom of the time. It is possible that Lesy is not so much ignoring this kind of social-political information, as simply assuming it as a background to local events which he need not deal with; "his concern," says Susman, "is rather with the psychology of a people in a particular time and place." Particular times and places do not exist in a vacuum, however, as Lesy himself admits when he introduces material from outside the town and the decade and when he ends the book by—to use appropriate death imagery—embalming his townspeople with theory and burying them under a load of generalization.

Let me give Lesy the benefit of the doubt and accept that his conscious narrowing of perspective is a legitimate methodological decision. Perhaps I should say artistic decision, since the book is a collage and its "primary intention" more ambitious than that of reconstructing Black River Falls in the 1890s. He ends his introduction with the invocation of a mystical union in which the book, "a flexible mirror," unites subject, author, and reader in an experiential moment rich with multivalued images. His fruity prose is just a highfalutin restatement of what happens whenever a book and a reader meet, but I am willing to accept that the Black River Falls presented in *Wisconsin Death Trip* says a lot about Lesy, and my reaction to it a great deal about me. Later on, I will get to him and me more directly, but both of us are inextricably bound up in the paragraphs that immediately follow—a discussion of *his* Black River Falls and how it was made.

The book mixes pages of prose with sequences of photographs, neither of which is designed to illustrate the other, both of which are to contribute to the total effect, to provide "variations in images of acceptance and denial." Most of the prose consists of items quoted from the *Badger State Banner*, labeled by date and as town, county, or state news. According to Lesy, "these articles created temporary but intimate bonds between creatures who had been separated and divided by a selfish culture of secular Calvinism." Sufferers received comfort and others immunization from having private events become public, he believes, but there is something a touch too mystical about this response to reports in a weekly newspaper. Anyone who has lived in a small town knows how intense the curiosity is, but it is as safe to assume that the news provides a separation (I didn't cut my wife's throat) as a bond. I prefer to take the news items as news items, however, and to assume that everyone who read them used them according to his own psychological (or informational) needs. Nor do I hear the same voice—"cold, sardonic, and clear, like black marble"—that Lesy hears. Put aside the preposterous idea that black marble is sardonic—or clear, for that matter—I find only one sardonic sentence in all the *Banner* quotations; at the end of an item about the suicide of a man accused of stealing a horse, the reporter writes, "It is probable that he did not realize what a lot of good fees he was thus snatching from Grant County attorneys and court officials." Even that smacks less of inherent scorn, stylistic or personal, than it does of the kind of snottiness that an editor in one county might dredge up for officials a few counties away. In the main, the voice of the news stories—which Lesy identifies as that of editor Frank Cooper—is a matter-of-fact one, reciting the who-what-when-where of disaster after disaster and seldom making any editorial intrusions. There is another voice, usually attached to county items, one that has the happy knack of rich nineteenth-century funeral prose, as in the account of little Bertie Carpenter's death which ends, "His remains were sweetly placed in the bosom of the earth at the cemetery here where he will be rocked in God's great cradle during his peaceful sleep." Such items, presumably written by or for the grieving families, are probably real memorial items, like the photographs of babies in coffins and of funeral flower arrangements, but Lesy oversimplifies his use of the material by giving the same psychological weight to all items.

Whoever wrote the stories and however they were received in their own time, they have become, in *Wisconsin Death Trip*, carefully chosen images in a view of Black River Falls. If it is to be the "charnel house" of Lesy's conclusion, the items must help put the "black" in Black River. Here, then, is a relentless stream of suicides, murders, deaths, maimings, commitments, fires, bankruptcies, lightened with occasional eccentricities and mild perversions. Lesy explains that he concentrated only on the stories and accounts that concerned the "psychology or personality of events," but I cannot really see why a box supper at the Methodist church reflects any less "psychology or personality" than a woman's throwing herself into a well. In a few cases, I find implications in the accounts that Lesy probably does not intend. The first one, from 1885, is a notice in which one Eric Peterson thanks the citizens "for aid rendered and sympathy extended . . . since the amputation of my leg." Like Peterson, I

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think the notice is about community, but Lesy, I suspect, is more interested in the amputation. An item about an eighty-year-old man who takes a fourth wife seems to me a "life" note not a "death" one, and one death story is pure benediction as far as I am concerned; the news that ninety-year-old Alexander Gardapie "walked into a saloon, drank a glass of gin, asked the time of day, sat down, and died," only makes me want to snap at Lesy, "Dry bones, my ass." These are exceptions, however. For the most part, there is no escaping Lesy's death trip.

Yet, that is hardly the only trip that might be made back to Black River Falls in the 1890s. Without denying that truth of a sort hovers over Lesy's selections, I have to report that the farther I went in the book the more conscious I was of being diddled. Out of the fifty-two issues of the *Banner* in 1898, Lesy chose forty-four items, less than one a week, and only fifteen of them were specifically about Black River Falls. For 1892—perhaps a bad year for disasters—there are only sixteen items, four of them local. What was the rest of the paper filled with? Does one have to travel to the Microfilm Reading Room of the Wisconsin State Historical Society in Madison to discover other and just as true versions of Black River Falls or can one assume, as the Stage Manager in *Our Town* did about ancient Babylon, that "all those families sat down to supper, and the father came home from his work, and the smoke went up the chimney."

Interspersed with the quotations from the *Banner* are other kinds of prose designed to heighten Lesy's single effect. The most obvious are the excerpts from the records of the state asylum. Then there are the words of "two mythical creatures," whose remarks are labeled "Town Gossip" and "Local History." I get the second of these somewhat confused with unlabeled italic passages—presumably Lesy without disguise—which offer a somewhat jazzy history of the town and some of its characters ("Those men may have been his captors, and he may have been nothing more than a pimp while they were respectable citizens, but they were all men nonetheless, all equally trapped in the battle for a buck and a good lay"), and I find the Town Gossip disconcerting when he/she lapses into contemporary slang ("weirdie") or jargon ("father fixation"). Aside from Lesy's fictions, there are also passages from Glenway Wescott, Hamlin Garland, Sinclair Lewis and Edgar Lee Masters which, since they are not confined to the 1890s, may be intended to say something about the continuity of awfulness in small Midwestern towns. What the presence of these figures should have done, but did not in most cases, was alert the reviewers to the fairly conventional view that Lesy provides. *Death Trip* has been celebrated in the terms of Susman's preface, in which he says that the book "offers us a unique opportunity to face not the American Dream but the American Nightmare." Even if historians are more given to "aspirations and hopes" than "fears and nightmares," which I doubt, it is an obvious fact of American literature that the serious regional writers, particularly the Midwesterners (Willa Cather and Sherwood Anderson even more obviously than the ones Lesy quotes) have chronicled the physical and spiritual anguish of the small town.

I have even more trouble with the photographs than I do with the prose. They are the work of Charles Van Schaick, an ordinary commercial photographer who worked in Black River Falls between 1890 and 1910. He left over 30,000 glass negatives of which some 3000 are preserved in the Wisconsin State Historical Society; from these, Lesy presumably got both the idea for and the visual material in this book. Van Schaick was, as Lesy says, a man who "obeyed the most prosaic conventions of portraiture," and the pictures seem to me ordinary studio shots, austerely posed, mixed with pictures of family groups, town buildings, clowning young people. They are interspersed, Lesy says, with "pictures that Van Schaick would never have made." Since the pictures are not identified, I do not know whether that means that some of the reproduced photographs are by someone other than Van Schaick (there are obvious differences in quality) or whether Lesy is simply alluding to the trick pictures that have been made from Van Schaick's negatives. Some of the pictures are more interesting than others, because some of the subjects are more attractive or more bizarre than others, but I am neither startled nor shocked by them, certainly not into seeing them as decorations on a charnel-house wall. Although the pictures of dead babies and funeral floral pieces may seem a little unusual in 1973, they would come as no surprise to anyone who knew anything about nineteenth-century memorial practices. After having seen "Death, Heaven & the Victorians," the excellent show at the Brighton Art Gallery in 1970, I find it difficult to believe that wanting to save a photograph of a dead child is evidence of "survival guilt," as Lesy suggests, or part of a pathetic attempt to build a wall against the implacable economic and natural forces that were presumably destroying the rural small town.

In an attempt to make the pictures *mean* in a way in which they were never intended—nor would now if presented directly—Lesy goes in for a variety of tricks. His juxtapositions—live babies alongside coffined babies is the most obvious—are meant to surprise us into new perceptions, I assume, but they seem simply artificial editorializing, although perhaps not quite as annoying as the games he plays when he doctors photographs. He frequently presents the same photograph twice, once in mirror image, as though the repetition were some kind of comment—sameness? monotony?—on the people involved. He occasionally draws a large black circle around one figure in a group, and he is fond of enlarging individual faces taken from group photographs, perhaps as a means of emphasizing the kind of dementedly staring quality that is the inevitable result—check your own school pictures—of an uneasy subject meeting an indifferent photographer. His most outrageous bit of doctoring can be found in a

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studio portrait of two rather pleasant old women dressed in black. He gives them in mirror image and then at the bottom reproduces their hands, again twice, as though they were reaching but not touching. He caps the whole thing by sending a greatly enlarged hand (it belongs to another old woman pictured on the next page) into the top of the picture as though —I suppose—it were the hand of death oozing through the photographer's fake backdrop to spirit his real subjects away. Lesy, then, forces himself between me and the pictures —which seems a great waste of an interesting archive—and robs them of the immediacy that be seems to want when he warns us in his introduction, "The pictures you're about to see are of people who were once actually alive." In fact, the pictures are pieces of paper to be cut up, rearranged, pasted in odd juxtapositions. In a similar way, the people in the newspaper items, under the rain of repetition, lose all individuality, become as much "shadow puppets in a . . . drama of rural decay" as those case-study figures that Lesy condemns in the work of the nineteenth-century sociologist, Frank Blackmar.

It is fairly obvious from what I have written above that I think Lesy is both sentimental toward and unfaithful to his material and that he expresses both attitudes in bad prose and pointlessly clever graphics. He also has a disconcerting habit of sprinkling his writing with sentences that are so absurd that they pull me up short and make me wonder where his mind can be. In one of the italicized history sections, commenting on a wife's joining her husband in Wisconsin, he says, "She and Jacob must have slept together as soon as she got off the boat, since a year later she bore her girl child." I cannot see anything particularly unusual in a couple's immediately sleeping together after a long separation, but that assumption hardly follows from what Lesy says unless he does not know the gestation period for the human child. It may seem a little harsh to harp on this kind of inadequacy in Lesy, but the reader is dependent on him for the choices and the presentation in *Wisconsin Death Trip.* Even more troublesome than his shortcomings in style and perception are the habits of mind that the book reflects. Lesy's reduction of all behavior to two forms of mental disorder and his own strange response to death (he never sees death as a fact of life as the people in Black River Falls, for all their memorial photographs, almost certainly did) probably make his version of the town inevitable. As a result, he never uses the horrors he has collected—the facts of insanity and suicide and incendiarism—to give flesh to the dark and dangerous side of American life in the 1890s, and he never gives a credible picture of Black River Falls, where light must have mixed with dark and charnel houses shared space with birthing rooms. Would you buy a used town from this man?

In casting Lesy as an inveterate crepe-hanger, I may be forcing on myself the role of Pollyanna. I hope not. I have for a book like *The Happy Valley* the same kind of suspicion that I feel for *Wisconsin Death Trip.* Pauline Dakin Taft subtitled her collection of the photographs of her father, Leonard Dakin (a much better photographer than Van Schaick), "The Elegant Eighties in Upstate New York," and openly declared, "In this book I attempt to depict the unalloyed contentment and complacency of that bygone age when there were no cold wars or atomic secrets." I do not now nor have I ever lived on Sunnybrook Farm. Yet, I was delighted to run across a marvelous 1881 volume, *History of Northern Wisconsin,* in which the arrival of "woman" at Black River Falls was described in a dancing paragraph of which this is only a sample: "Here her life was like a Summer's day, made up of bright things only." Pure nonsense, of course, but *Wisconsin Death Trip* is only the other side of the coin, which is too bad because its reverse schmaltziness not only wrecks it as a book but also calls into doubt the whole method of documentary reconstruction.

—Gerald Weales

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Where are the bikeways?

You've probably heard a lot about today's bicycle boom and the many advantages bicycling offers. It is clean, quiet, inexpensive, energy-efficient, healthful — and fun. You might say the bicycle is one of the world's greatest inventions!

However, there *is* one big, sobering drawback: Bicycling in North America today simply isn't safe! An estimated 900 bicycle riders will be killed and more than 40,000 injured in bike-auto accidents this year alone in the United States. Most of these accidents could be avoided with adequate bikeways — separate pathways just for bicycles and safe routes in conjunction with roads.

But: *Where are the bikeways?* This country's 80 million cyclists have only 16,000 miles of bikeways, or about *13 inches for each bike rider*! Compare that with the 3 million miles of paved roads available to 90 million motorists. And most of the existing bikeways are far from ideal. Instead of protective curbing to separate bikes from autos, you usually find just white lines or signs along the road's edge, which do little more than lull both cyclists and motorists into a false sense of security.

Who is holding things up?

Why aren't our millions of bicycle-riding taxpayers provided with better, safer facilities? Because most government bodies continue to pump *our* money into still more roads, highways, and freeways. Their actions make us even more dependent on automobiles, which results in more smog, noise, and traffic congestion — not to mention depletion of the world's natural resources.

And what about the citizens who *must* rely on alternate transportation? Half of our nation's adults do without the automobile, by need or by choice. Yet no major bikeway, bus or rail transit funds have been made available, and proposals fall ridiculously short of the *real needs*. The problem is further compounded by the fact that attempts to solve our transportation dilemma with gas tax funds continue to meet vehement opposition from powerful road and highway lobbies.

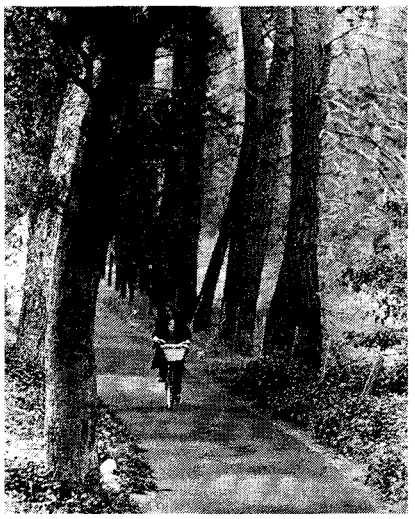

Photo by Jack Wilson

What could a bicycle community be like?

Here's a practical, viable alternative. Well-defined bikeways, separated from cars, radiate from residential neighborhoods to schools. On-street car parking gives way to protected bikeways on key thoroughfares. Bicycle storage facilities are located throughout the city. Commuters bicycle to public transportation stations, store their vehicles, and continue by bus or rail into commercial sectors of the city. Buses going into the countryside have racks to hold bicycles. Adequate bus and rail facilities play a key role, especially during bad weather. That's what we could have!

Friends For Bikecology is trying to help

Friends For Bikecology has been working two years for more and safer bikeways. We sponsored National Bikecology Week in May 1972, involving thousands of people in more than 70 cities throughout the nation. This activity served to publicize our ideas and goals and to win the support of many legislators and planners.

We have two main objectives. First, to see that bicycle, bus, and rail transportation receive an equitable share of public funds. In 1972, *$22 billion* of our gasoline and *property taxes* were spent in the United States for roads and highways, while *less than one billion* went for public transportation. And practically nothing was provided for bikeways! We must convince policy makers to support a balanced transportation system, including bikeways. Motorists will also benefit because congestion on roads and highways would be relieved.

Our second objective is to convince planners to "THINK BIKE!" They should see the bicycle as an essential part of the larger transportation system and an integral part of community life.

The facts are on our side. Traffic studies show that 43% of all urban work trips made by automobiles are four miles or less; and in 9 out of 10 trips, the driver is the sole occupant. These trips could just as easily be made on bicycles. Bicycles will even conserve the taxpayers' dollars. For example, a downtown auto parking structure costs approximately *$4000 for each car space* — enough to build an enclosed facility that can hold *150 bicycles*!

How you can help Bikecology help you

We can help bring about needed changes that will benefit everyone.

Bike rider or not, if you are interested in a safer, more sensible transportation system, please send us a contribution of $5 or more. You can also help by writing your local, state and federal representatives, asking them what they are doing to support bicycling and public transportation facilities.

As a Bikecology supporter, you will receive a copy of our poster-style newsletter, *"Serendipity"* — a mosaic of bike-related items.

Please mail the coupon and your check for $5 or more to help Friends For Bikecology continue this important work. Thank you.

Ken Kolsbun

KEN KOLSBUN, Executive Director

Friends For Bikecology
1035 E. De La Guerra St.
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93103

I am enclosing my contribution of $5 or more to help Friends For Bikecology in their endeavor to obtain sound transportation including more and safer bikeways.

Amount enclosed $_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Please make check payable to **Friends For Bikecology**

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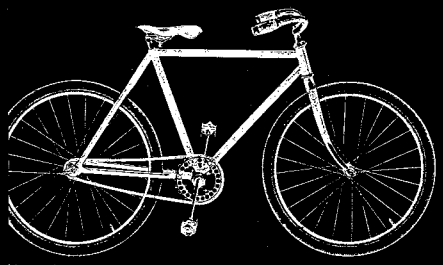

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